

CLASS STRUGGLE

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**FORCE LABOUR
OUT OF COALITION!**

**TOTAL VICTORY TO
THE BRITISH MINERS !**

**James Connolly's
Legacy**

**50
PENCE**

class struggle No.14

Cover picture by Derek Speirs shows the Labour Parliamentary Party. Also by Derek Speirs are photos on pages 5 and 9.

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EDITORIAL :

On the eve of a so-called 'national plan' in which the Labour-Fine Gael Government reveals more of its savage determination to make workers pay for the crisis of capitalism, we examine the importance of the Labour Party question for the Irish working class. Concrete issues of affiliation, workers democracy, political levies, are squarely addressed, and we outline what must be the key action goals for mobilising the class in its own defence in the present period.

On the back page IWG argues that the union leaders must be forced off the fence into mobilising a fight to stop the Coalition's savage so-called Criminal Justice Bill.

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SOLIDARITY WITH THE NUM.

The relevance of the Miners' struggle to the Irish working class, the bureaucratic record of the Dublin Trades Council, the recent IWG-organised miners' tour, Northern workers' record and the silence of the Republican movement. How Poland's Jaruzelski scabs on the NUM while Solidarnosc upholds international solidarity.

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JAMES CONNOLLY— THE MARXIST ANALYSIS

We publish in this issue the second article of our series analysing the legacy of James Connolly from the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism. The first traced his apprenticeship to the Marxism of the British Social Democratic Federation. The present article examines his regression away from Marxism in his attempt to deal with the Irish National Question, and how this development was influenced by the Populist legacy of James Fintan Lalor who was a key figure for Connolly's mentor, John Leslie.

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TOTAL VICTORY TO THE BRITISH MINERS

'Issues of the British Miners Strike' is the only in-depth analysis yet published on the Irish Left of the crucial questions facing the NUM struggle. The miners' strike is the first direct mass resistance to Thatcher's offensive against workers in Britain and the North. The article shows how revolutionary communists in Britain address the issues of this struggle which contains the possibility of a major step forward by the working class.

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BOOK REVIEW - GRENADA

The Book Review in this issue takes a critical look at a factually useful book by Observer Journalist Hugh O'Shaughnessy on the background of Reagan's imperialist invasion of Grenada a year ago.

Force Labour out of Coalition!

Crisis of the Labour Party and the Socialist Response

The Labour leadership's agreement to cut 50% off existing food subsidies on the night of August 3rd spotlights yet again the class collaboration of that Party in the present offensive against Irish workers and their families whereby Irish capitalism aims to solve its own crisis of profitability and to guarantee the flow of super-profits to its international financial masters. The decision was kept back until the Dail was shut up for the summer recess so that dissent in the Labour ranks could let off steam without the embarrassment of a vote to expose the sham of Bell, Taylor, McLoughlin, Prendergast and cronies.

Meanwhile the trade union leaderships bleat with impotent and windy protests about Coalition policy while themselves rushing in to negotiate surrender at every threat of closure. Blow upon blow rains down on the organised working class and workers grow increasingly numbed, divided and confused as every new attack drives home despite their leaders' empty rhetoric.

Never has it been more obvious that the crisis of the Irish working class boils down to its own crisis of leadership. For, despite stumbling at every turn since 1968, the capitalist parties' political sway over workers has not only NOT been broken but has not even been challenged by any fighting political leadership within the working class. Despite all the opportunities afforded by the crises, especially of the past three years, the bourgeois parliamentary political mould has remained intact with the active help of Labour - and in the previous two Dails with the assistance of the Workers Party, Kemmy and Gregory. And now with Labour's active help the ruling class has been able to step up its offensive despite working class rank and file resistance.

Since the Treaty, the Irish working class has been divided - partitioned - into two imperialised confessional states within which openly pro-capitalist parties command the majority allegiance of workers. The torch of political radicalism has fallen into the hands of the non-working class Republican leaderships time and again by default of the labour movement. Thus in the North, while the majority of workers at elections stand with the reactionary Unionist parties, even the aroused anti-unionist minority, in revolt against British rule, has no independent working class party despite the socialist pretensions of Sinn Fein. In the South, the openly pro-capitalist parties have commanded over 80% of the parliamentary seats for 50 years.

It is no surprise, therefore, that all sections of the trade union leadership continually return to the need for a political voice for the movement and are continually forced to do so in terms of the Irish Labour Party. Some, like John Carroll (ITGWU), do so because they dare not encourage direct struggle from below. (Carroll warns - "Gamble on deflation or face social upheaval" - Irish Times 5/9/84!) Therefore Carroll and his ilk among the union leaders need to have a political wing, a wing effectively insulated from rank and file trade union control, which could at times wheel and deal with Government on behalf of the unions, but which more generally could act out a token show of opposition to the bourgeoisie in the Dail and focus the hopes and impulses of the class as much as possible into parliamentary illusions - and away from mass direct action for political and economic goals.

LABOUR AND THE UNION LEFTS

Other union leaders, like Matt Merrigan and recently John Mitchell (IDATU), who are - or were - seen as advocates of militant trade unionism, sound off about the need for a genuine workers' political party because, on the one hand, the militant action with which they associate raises unavoidable political demands in struggle - on taxation, public works, social services, nationalisation, prices, minimum wages etc. - and, on the other hand, because they too need an escape route from the logic of militant action in a period of open class confrontation. For, significant militancy by one section of the class (occupations such as Ranks, wage-round leadership by one section, tax protests by Waterford Glass etc.) poses directly the need to generalise it through rank and file solidarity if it is not to be defeated. But this is what the "lefts" in the trade union leadership cannot consistently pursue, because like the rest bureaucracy it would undermine their social position as professional brokers between workers and bosses.

So we see also why in the utterances of these figures, even in their most passionate pleas for a "new" or a "genuine" or a "socialist" party of labour, they do not overcome the fatal and false division of the class struggle into economic trade union struggle on one side, and on the other the "political" struggle by a Party at the polls and in parliament.

Mitchell reflected this outlook when he told the Sunday Tribune (5/5/84):
"The fact that we have no political wing is the biggest single drawback that the Irish working class has to contend with."

Yes, Brother Mitchell, but in a more urgent sense the biggest single drawback is that in fact the working class DOES have a political "wing", a Labour Party that has betrayed us for seventy years. But, adds Mitchell:
"Not even in their most hypocritical moments would Labour now claim to represent workers".

LABOUR'S CLAIMS

But Labour DOES claim to represent workers, even though this claim is now SEEN increasingly to be a lie and a sham. Even now, Spring and his Labour ministers do CLAIM that they are moderating Fine Gael's austerity policies as a trade-off for keeping them in office - claiming that things would otherwise be worse for workers, unemployed, women and youth. Of course this is a lie. Labour doesn't moderate the overall savagery of the ruling class offensive; it simply covers for it. It actually rescues the ruling class from its parliamentary crisis - which recurs from the historic division between its two capitalist parties - by helping the ruling class to form a stable Coalition Government to effectively enforce its austerity measures on the working class. In agreeing to slap 8p on the loaf of bread, Spring's clique made noises about balancing measures for the working class in the next Dail session - taxes on farmers, tax relief for workers, low-income supplements for the poorest families. These, too, will prove to be empty cosmetic gestures, parliamentary ping-pong balls that will be knocked back and forth to deafen everyone while the real programme of the Coalition is carried through. That programme is nothing less than to clamp the lid down on the working class, break its trade union resistance, make it pay with unemployment and wage cuts for the bosses' crisis of profitability, and make it pay for the

The Irish Labour Party possibly faces extinction. That is the appearance, but its crisis-torn history is a warning against any such easy prediction. It has to be understood as constantly manoeuvring in relation to the combativity of the working class, the stability of the bourgeois state and especially the crude self-interest of its leadership. Its support has oscillated continuously from 21.3% to 5.7% of General Election votes. Two of its peaks were at moments of "left" turns in 1943 and 1969. It has even been split in two - when a nationalist xenophobic, "anti-communist" anti-Larkinite ITGWU set up National Labour from 1943 to 1950. It has supported Fianna Fail in government or entered government with Fine Gael. It has had several "left" turns in opposition, and it has at other times in opposition actually continued its political coalitionism.

The narrow limits within which the Irish Labour Party oscillates are dictated in the last analysis by the interests and world view of the labour and trade union bureaucracy as a whole. Acting as a class-wide broker between its own membership and the ruling class, the union leadership has always needed some form of political representation. Like the leaderships of all trade union movements functioning within capitalism, the union officialdom is a distinct caste within the working class that has solved its own social problems by acting as broker between labour and capital. This largely unaccountable trade union officialdom, with its dyed-in-the-wool routinism

imperialist foreign debt - now the world's biggest per capita - through cuts in services, jobs, welfare, health and education.

LABOUR'S "CONSCIENCE"

Even at cabinet level, within the leadership clique, "dissent" and polite "agreement to disagree" are staged like so much theatre to allow the Coalition offensive to proceed while "saving" Labour's claim to represent the working class - "ultimately". So, we all saw Frank Cluskey, Minister for Energy, pack his briefcase for the TV cameras and leave office in protest at the Coalition's barefaced robbery of workers' taxes to feather the private owners of Dublin Gas. And we heard Spring, tongue in cheek, with knitted brow, tell of his "respect" for Frank Cluskey's conscience. The media gave us Frank Cluskey the lone bearer of Labour's honour, and the union leaders rallied around him with rhetoric, especially Attley in Cluskey's own FWUI. They told us how the Gas industry should be nationalised - after having for ten years spurned their own members' calls for that measure and then refused to fight for it when finally the FWUI passed a resolution to nationalise Dublin Gas two years ago.

FAILURE OF THE LEFTS TO FIGHT

Frank Cluskey did not fight. Of course not - for he has always been at the very centre of the lying clique that has run the Labour party for the past decade. His action is merely a measure of how far the Party has become an instrument of Fine Gael. But the "lefts" in Labour, including "Militant", did not fight either. They did not

and bureaucracy, its wheeler-dealing behind workers' backs, its acceptance of the bosses' right to hire and fire and the worker's right merely to bargain within the illusions of the "wage contract", is always careful of its narrow interest in preserving its own privileges and its prestige. The Labour Party, in its leadership and elected representatives and their cronies at every level, is part and parcel with the union bureaucracy of a broader labour movement bureaucracy. Indeed, the political wing forms an extension of the career horizons of trade union officialdom. Labour's programme, however it may be coloured from time to time by rhetoric, even by explicit talk of socialism, remains the limp and pathetic aspiration for a better world through political and social reforms within capitalism. This is the world view of the bureaucracy.

Despite its bourgeois programme - seeking reforms within the capitalist order but always upholding that order at the expense of the working class - Labour nevertheless "rests upon" the working class. Its historical and continued formal relation with the major unions gives it its license to call itself the Party of Labour. The party is not directly controlled by the union leadership, not even of the affiliated unions (15 including the biggest, ITGWU, FWUI and ATGWU). The affiliation funds are now marginal, and the union delegates are a definite minority at Conference - an arrangement preferred by the union leadership on the whole because it enables them to avoid accountability to the rank and file for the actions and decisions of the Party which they connive in.

attempt to make of Cluskey's pose (or any other similar acts of dissent) a starting point from which to mobilise the anti-coalition sentiment into ACTION by organised workers to force Labour out of Coalition and to open up the road of STRUGGLE for the needs of the class - the road of struggle for a genuine Workers Government.



John Mitchell of IDATU

The party is not only bourgeois in programme, but also in form. Its deputies hold themselves consciously unaccountable to the Party Conference or constituency organisations in the last analysis, standing instead on the bourgeois parliamentary fiction that deputies must be independent of sectional interest and accountable to "the electorate" as a whole - in other words their own "consciences" as formed by shrewd self-interest and the weight of ruling class pressure!

Party democracy is largely an empty form easily manipulated by the leadership and their cronies - the Party machine. So, for example, a "rule" prevents discussion of Coalition for 3 years after deciding to enter it! So too, at times when the membership were increasingly disquiet at labour's loss of votes and identity, the special conferences that ratified the two recent Coalitions did so in effect without reference to the Government programme. Secretly negotiated Coalition 'programmes' were presented to the delegates on the day without prior discussion. Typically an 'attractive' concession from the capitalist partner such as the pathetic tax on rich dwellings, is whipped up into a major victory, and the delegates are corralled into voting to rejoin the gravy-train of governmental office while reassuring themselves that they must surely have a 'moderating' effect on the capitalist offensive, for which the working class should thank them!

The last such conference, in Limerick in December 1982, plumped by a ratio of eight to five for the Fine Gael bait. In the circumstance of the massive decline of support the pitiful level of

IMPORTANCE OF LABOUR PARTY ISSUE

Taken together, the absence of any fighting leadership for the working class movement, the crisis of the labour Party, and the potential of this to bring down the Government and obstruct its savage attacks, all make it clear that the question of how to deal with the Labour Party has a practical and immediate importance for the most combative sections of the working class, even though they have not yet been won to recognise it. It is a question, however, to which there are many wrong responses being peddled by different sections of the union leadership and by the rival stalinist groups - the Communist Party and the Workers party, as also by the centrist groups who claim to represent revolutionary communism (Trotskyism).

The view of Labour held by major section of the trade union leadership flows from the role Labour plays as a lightning-conductor for the political questions that arise from the struggles, demands and expectations of the rank and file. By "referring" such questions to the "political wing", union officialdom absolves itself from making issues of them in the direct industrial action of the class, except under extreme pressure where it resorts to controlled TOKEN action such as the tax demos.

Labour was especially useful in this way in the period leading up to the 1973-77 Coalition. At that time the militancy, organisation and expectations of the class had reached a historic peak. The union leaderships, arming themselves with the "two-tier" picket system (a system of official scabbery which re-inforced workplace disunity), proceeded to take

opposition revealed a deeply conservative party strongly identified with the line of the leadership. Contrary to the blandishments of the Militant tendency, inherent conflict between the 'membership' and the 'leadership' is not a consistent feature of the Party. In the trade union movement there is a real enduring material conflict of interest between the bureaucracy and the rank and file. The Party, however, unlike a union, selects and shapes its voluntary membership largely on the basis of its existing programme and perspectives. The extent to which the 'membership' share the outlook of the leadership is reinforced also by the narrowness of its base of support - and certain social features of its composition. In particular there is a close identification of personnel at local level with union functionaries.

When even this conservative membership was roused to open revolt in the wake of the food-subsidies decision, Spring used the loyalty of his machine cronies in the meeting of 300 Cork members on September 5th to ensure the meeting was broken up without the anti-Coalition resolutions being taken - even by half-past one in the morning! It is vital to the resolve of those genuinely opposed to class collaboration to understand that the bureaucracy and the Party machine is no respecter of democracy and it must never be trusted or given an inch of advantage!

(Copies of articles on Labour from back issues of Class Struggle are available in photocopy for 1.50. In addition an extensive 50-page presentation of the rich heritage of revolutionary understanding and tactics on reformist parties is available from IWG, with other articles, in 'Permanent Revolution' No.1 for two pounds, post included.)

bargaining out of the hands of the workplace organisations, strengthened the hold of employed unaccountable functionaries, and tied the class to "no-strike" agreements negotiated at national conferences with the employers and state in return for "orderly" wage increases - later to become orderly wage cuts. Labour's abandonment of its pledge to an independent parliamentary road added a political dimension to this open class collaboration. It aided in diverting workers' expectations away from reliance upon their own struggle to instead rely on sham promises of "progressive" social legislation to be initiated by Labour in Coalition. The "Equal Pay" law (which O'Leary tried to suspend on the appeal of the shoe industrialists), the "Unfair Dismissals" law etc. - are a measure of the deceptions that were perpetrated on workers. (The sellouts on contraception, the stepping up of repression also illuminate the real nature of that Government!)

However, when economic crisis, with Labour in a capitalist Government, drives daggers into living standards and when workers then take revenge on it at the polls, the union leaders prefer Labour to refurbish its rhetoric on the Opposition benches while leaving the unions free to deal directly with Government - as in the 'National Understandings' and other dealings with Fianna Fail after 1977, and in 1982. Excusing their pathetic sellouts in 'tri-partite' talks with bosses and Government, the union leaders can turn to blaming the workers for not voting for their own Party, for leaving themselves politically unrepresented.

But when the self-interest of the Labour leadership-clique flies in the face of the union leaders' preference for dealing with Fianna Fail, when Labour instead enters successive Fine Gael governments that are all too obviously bent on destroying living standards, even the right-wing of the union leadership is compelled to call on Labour to get out. This is precisely what happened when Labour defied the union leaders and entered successive Coalitions in June 1981 and November 1982.

But union officialdom will not FIGHT to FORCE Labour out, for that would mean mobilising class-wide direct action, industrial and street action, to hammer home their demands. At a time of severe mass alienation among workers their "responsibility" to capitalist "order" holds them back from the risk of using mass protest even in a controlled token way, for they cannot guarantee their own control of it. Caught in this bind, the union leadership is capable of carrying out its threats of formal disaffiliation. But such disaffiliations would not be decisive in forcing Labour out of government. For, as signalled by Attley, Labour's loss of direction is forgivingly viewed as "temporary" by the union leadership:

Mr. William Attley, general secretary of the Federated Workers union of Ireland, said the political wing of the trade union movement "has temporarily collapsed, both intellectually and morally, and currently props up the most anti-working class Government this country has had to contend with for many a long day." (I.Times 3/9/84)

By deciding 'from above' to disaffiliate from Labour to avoid rank and file confrontation with the question of what kind of party is needed, and

rather than mobilise struggle from below to force Labour out of its naked class collaboration, the union leaders would risk losing their sometimes useful political representative - a loss that might not be easily reversible. But it might, more significantly ditch a historic gain, the PRINCIPLE of class-wide political representation of workers.

Possibly such union leaders would cover their deed with local or individual political sponsorships, a recipe for more Gregoryism, but no substitute for the principle of a class-wide party.

As for the Workers Party faction in the trade union bureaucracy, they would likely find this a more opportune arrangement for quietly tying sections of the class organisations to their 'left' reformist bandwagon. Hitherto they have cowered at the prospect of any open battle with Labour in the unions for the affiliation of the mass organisations, just as they have refused to call openly for the right of affiliation to a 'broad-church' party of all working class political organisations. Their cowardice and secretiveness in this respect is because they have no basis for claiming that they are in any way a fundamental alternative to the reformism of the Labour Party. Their distinctive difference, their stalinism as witnessed by support for Jaruzelski against the Polish Solidarnosc, is not something they want to have to defend in any open debate in the mass organisations!

THE CP'S OPPORTUNIST DILEMMA

The smaller official 'Communist Party', which is influential because of stalinism's world strength, prefers to maintain Labour as the union-affiliated Party, seeing it as the historic vehicle for mass working class politics. It sees its own role as advisor to the class and as local representative of the Workers' States whose existence - in the CP's class-collaborationist view - creates the possibility of socialism arriving in Ireland from the global struggle rather than from class struggle of Irish workers against the WHOLE Irish bourgeoisie. (In reality these are bureaucratically degenerated workers' states in need of a political revolution to achieve workers' democratic control to open the road to socialism. The CP, therefore, shares the outlook of the stalinist bureaucratic regimes and not authentic communism.) At present, however, trade union links with Labour - which also have the advantage for the CP of blocking the claims of the rival stalinist Workers Party - conflict with the strategy which the CP urges on the working class movement. That strategy seeks to ally with the "national" or "patriotic" sections of the bourgeoisie represented in Fianna Fail, against the "pro-imperialist" section, Fine Gael - as part of "defending" the Kremlin's interests against capitalist imperialism. Hence the contradiction that Labour's chronic Coalition with Fine Gael drove the CP so far as to call on workers to vote Fianna Fail in the November '82 General Election

The divisions of the class, especially in its organisations (over 20 separate unions in some large workplaces!), the consequent strength of the bureaucratic apparatus, and the conflicts between

the stalinist political factions within its "left" wing, give the majority faction of the bureaucracy the ability to fend off any pressure to open up debate in the unions on what kind of party the working class needs, unless that pressure is consciously imposed through sharp demands raised in the struggles of the rank and file. So, the bureaucracy remains prepared to risk formal disaffiliations to absolve itself of Labour's crimes and as leverage to either nurse Labour back into "opposition", or into switching Labour's parliamentary support to a more "populist" Fianna Fail government - the alternative coalitionism now being suggested by deputy Bell.

THE CENTRISTS AND THE MASS PARTY

A distinct version of the "new" party of Labour is put forward by two of the centrist groups. These are groups which oscillate between reformist and revolutionary politics. They are the local sections of the international groups resulting from the political degeneration of Trotsky's Fourth International after 1948 - the Peoples Democracy (part of the crisis-wracked United Secretariat led by Ernest Mandel - USFI) and the League for a Workers Republic (tied to the French Lambertists in the FI-ICR).

Both groups appeal to the working class to build a mass party of the "Connolly" type. The idea is a historical nonsense. Connolly argued for and helped formally to establish the ITUC as a Labour Party. He did not fight to give it a programme that in any way made concrete - in perspective, strategy or tactics - his own undoubted personal revolutionary opposition to capitalism and imperialism. In this muddled formula the PD and LWR ditch the clear conception of the mass revolutionary workers' party worked out in living struggle and revolution by the Bolsheviks and Lenin and consistently fought for by Trotsky. The key to their muddleheadedness is to be found in the political adaptation of both groups to Irish petty bourgeois revolutionary nationalism.

The LWR calls for struggle unconditionally for a "United Ireland". It believes this must mean in practice the Workers Republic, but it does not spell out the method, the strategy and or the major tactics or the kind of Party needed to consciously bring a revolutionary working class to the head of that struggle. It collapses the whole of the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat into the completion of the bourgeois-democratic tasks left unresolved in 1921.

PD adapts much more consciously to the existing Republican movement - courting Sinn Fein lefts with opportunist propaganda for a new mass party which would fuse the two traditions of Labour and Republicanism (in reality the traditions of two different CLASSES) into an "anti-imperialist" party. The programme of that party would not be the dictatorship of the proletariat but the installation of an "anti-imperialist government" in the island. Like the LWR, the PD places its faith in the objective historic process to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. It expects that, independently of the conscious fight by workers for their own class dictatorship, a struggle for a programme consciously limited to bourgeois-democratic goals will INEVITABLY become the successful creation of the Workers Republic. In both cases the fight to clarify for workers what kind of party they really need is abandoned - if

indeed it was ever understood. The other side of this is that neither group offers any tactical method for dealing with the living issues of the existing Labour Party.

SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT

The third of the ex-Trotskyist centrist groups, the Socialist Workers Movement, by contrast offers itself as the ready-made trustworthy nucleus of the future mass party of the working class, which workers should therefore join. The SWM, under the leadership of the British SWP, grounds itself in an act of faith in the working class's ability to ultimately rise up and create its own revolutionary leadership - with the SWM to co-ordinate things. SWM explicitly rejects the Marxist and Leninist belief that worker militants must be won in advance to a clear and scientifically worked-out programme (perspectives, strategy and the major tactics for workers' revolution) if they are to constitute the nucleus of a developing Party to lead their class to power.

In particular the SWM rejects the idea of tactics towards the Labour Party as part of that programme - preferring moralistically to denounce the Labour party and write it off. Their method is the same in this respect as the method that led the British SWP under its various names to counterpose itself directly as the alternative to the British Labour Party.

However, the trade union militancy of the best workers, which the SWM believes is sufficient basis for building a party, does NOT amount to revolutionary consciousness. In practice it can be fatally vulnerable to left reformist leaders who will ride with militant struggle to keep ultimate control of it. And even when militants are won to clearly recognise the need of the class for a revolutionary party, they will often not join the self-proclaimed revolutionary group because they can see no evidence of concrete tactics which can map out the steps to win even a limited mass base out from under the hold of the dominant reformist leadership and organisation in the working class.

The logic of SWM's position would welcome the destruction of Labour at the hands of Fine Gael as the end of an illusion and an obstacle. But it would not be such. It would simply conceal the obstacle of reformist illusions, deepen them and shift them rightwards to the openly capitalist and petty-bourgeois parties. Not for SWM the Leninist tradition of recognising the progressive side of the existence of a distinct working class party, reformist though it be, namely the open affirmation of the legitimacy and need for working class political action. Even though sham in content, the formal and recognised existence of an independent working class party denies legitimacy to any overt action in the class organisations by the capitalist parties. More importantly it condenses the diffuse reformist outlook of the mass trade union movement into the visible political form of a Party which can be a clear and concrete target for revolutionary tactics! Despite a huge spread in their paper (6/9/84) on Labour, SWM answers not a single tactical question about the affiliation or political levy questions facing 200,000 workers NOW!

REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS TOWARDS LABOUR

If revolutionary communists are to win the

best class fighters to their banner, they must openly fight from now for the major elements of a coherent action programme for the class as a whole. In that action programme sharp and clear tactics towards the Labour Party must at this time be an important focus.

Basing our propaganda always on the call for direct rank and file action on the widest possible basis and for concrete demands, arguing for militant methods and the most thorough-going workers' democracy in struggle, we fight to FORCE Labour out of Coalition. In mobilising against centralised bourgeois attacks such as the savage August 'mini-budget', or against the destruction of civil liberties in the Criminal Justice Bill, and against the forthcoming social spending cuts, the slogan of forcing Labour out of Coalition is vital.

Within the Labour-affiliated unions the fight must be taken up to convene special conferences of lay rank and file delegates - no votes for unelected unrecallable officials - to debate the political needs of the working class, to place them as demands on Labour and to make the union leaderships fight to hold Labour directly accountable to a mobilised trade union movement. The open fight to make Labour accountable is especially important, not because there is any possibility of ever revolutionising a reformist party (as the Militant Tendency claims) but in order to win the vanguard from both Labourism AND 'non-political' syndicalism, forwards to revolutionary action.

Even with all its rapid variations of support and political colouration, Labour embodies, and reveals for all to see, the actual POLITICAL outlook and perspectives of routinised, bureaucratised trade unionism. It expresses especially the treachery lodged in the political world-view of the trade union leadership. At every point where militants take up the struggle for rank and file needs, they are confronted by that two-faced union leadership and cannot simply bypass it without the virtual certainty of remaining an isolated minority. They must confront it with clear demands which can force union officialdom to struggle or to be exposed as an enemy within. Such a method is a step to creating an alternative fighting leadership for the majority. It is summed up in the watchword of revolutionary trade unionism in the healthy period of the Communist International (1919-23): With the officials where possible, against them where necessary! But, because the needs of the class demand POLITICAL action goals, the question of a working class party and government is raised constantly diverted by reference to the existing official 'political representative' of the unions, or by sham moralising at workers along the lines of the cop-out formula used by both Carroll to absolve the unions from action and by Spring to absolve the Party - you can't expect Labour to carry out your demands if you don't vote for it in elections! The only way to deal with these diversions, and especially to undermine the bureaucracy's use of Labour in this way, is to continually fight for the unions to impose the express demands of the rank and file on the Party, that they should force the party to be accountable to workers' democracy, demanding that it be turned out to the struggles of the class and that its role in Parliament should be to serve those struggles at every point.

In so far as those demands are continually raised and rejected, militants can be inoculated

through real experience against any illusions in the inevitable time-honoured sham "left"-turns of Labour whereby it outflanks and defuses militant struggle with parliamentary illusions and rhetoric. On the other hand, in so far as those demands make some gains, force Labour out of Coalition or turn its branches out into real struggles, or develop conflict between the base and the leadership, so much the better for the struggles of the class! In this way some of the best elements who might be won to Labour in a period of "left" opposition can be drawn into action alongside revolutionaries and can test out in practice whose methods and whose perspectives offer the best way forward. Even more important, the best syndicalist or "non-political" workers entering into struggle can be won to confront in a practical way the vital question of the need for a Party.

This method of struggle on the issue of the Labour Party does not create illusions in it among workers because it is argued as part of a coherent action programme which confronts the bureaucracy and its bourgeois-reformist politics, attacks its brokerage-relationship to capitalism and fights at every point to subordinate the union and political apparatus of the movement to the direct control of the rank and file.

Precisely because revolutionary tactics combat the political essence of reformism, they rule out any fight now for a 'new' party of Labour which would simply change the personnel, the appearances and the initial political colouration of Labour, only to faithfully reveal the same fundamental reformist limits in its politics later - as the Merrigan-Browne Socialist Labour Party (1977-79) also did. Favourite reference point for the left-reformist promoters of the idea was the 1969 Labour programme. When it was flagrantly ditched with the turn to Coalition after 1971, the 'Left Liaison' grouping in Labour made it the criterion of Labour's treachery, going so far as Boucher's attempt to burn it at the rostrum of the 1976 Limerick Conference, in the year before the Lefts split to build the SLP. But that programme was nothing more than a comprehensive statement of utopian governmental aims, a programme for a better management of an imaginary independent Irish capitalist (26-county) economy with an expanded state-capitalist sector, typical to-day of the 'Workers Party'. It was not in any way a programme for struggle against capitalism, and certainly not revolutionary or socialist. Nowhere do the left-reformists conceive of a NEW KIND of Party because they dodge the vital questions of (1) what is the essence of labourism THROUGHOUT its history, and (2) what kind of party does the working class really need?

Revolutionary tactics towards Labour are the only ones that can defend the vital gain whereby the Irish trade union movement formally recognised the principle of political action through a party of its own, while at the same time NOT sowing illusions in the political content of the Irish Labour Party.

Not to fight on this basis leaves open the possibility that the union leaderships would destroy that principle, reverse the gains of 1912, subordinate the workers more intensively to the openly capitalist parties and create a reactionary hostility to politics of all forms among an embittered trade union membership and unemployed mass. Even if subsequently a new trade union party



Carroll, Kirwan & ITGWU delegation at 1984 Labour Conference. Block voting against the lifting of Standing Orders to allow debate on Coalition. Now the same gentlemen complain about Labour's role!

were to be proposed - and the obstacle might be even greater in time - all the illusions, which we say must be confronted NOW, would have to be experienced and discredited again, with the huge disadvantage that the new reformists could constantly appeal to their 'newness'.

The aim of revolutionary tactics towards Labour is nothing less than to expose and destroy it in a manner which takes the militant vanguard forward to the building of a revolutionary alternative. At all points in applying these tactics the communists openly and patiently explain the need for a revolutionary party. Such a party must be built in each country as a section of a World Party of socialist revolution - a new International. It must have a core of full-time worker-communists, must recruit and train politically the best fighters in the class and must always base itself in organisations of struggle where it openly argues for its programme and develops it through the test of experience. Its political line must always be fully under the democratic control of the membership and implemented by the membership as a whole under centralised authority. It must be a party in which every leader at every level would be directly elected and recallable and full-timers never paid more than a worker's wage. Its representatives in parliaments and councils would operate strictly under the discipline of the party, using their positions and resources at every point to further the struggles of the Party to mobilise the masses in action. Only this kind of democratic centralist party, first created by Lenin and consistently defended by Trotsky from 1917 (especially against Stalin's destruction of the Party) can ever be adequate to the historic tasks of the working class.

A FIGHTING PROGRAMME

Force the union leaders to mobilise mass industrial and street action to break Labour from Coalition, to win the sharpest immediate demands of

the working class and to commit Labour to this open class struggle. Don't allow them off the hook by bureaucratically disaffiliating the unions from Labour rather than make it an issue for the rank and file.

The refusal of Labour to break from its open class collaboration, the refusal of the union leaders to FORCE them out of Coalition, will not thus leave the best militants as political spectators of hypocritical posturing by the union bureaucrats on the question of Labour. Nor will it leave them disarmed if disaffiliations make the unions prey to the capitalist parties. The vanguard will instead be won to struggle for a genuine fighting political alternative.

* Fight to mobilise the unions, to force the union leaders to pit all the united resources of the movement against the offensive of the ruling class! Specifically in the Six Counties the ICTU must be forced to call workers out in action alongside the British miners to smash the Thatcherite anti-union laws with the only answer that can guarantee to defeat them in united struggle with the British working class - the indefinite General Strike!

*But let us not hold back while waiting on them to act! Fight to mobilise trade union workplace organisations, unemployed, youth, housewives, students and the communities under the lead of Action Councils of accountable delegates, centred on organised workers, to fight the cuts and austerity measures and to smash the repressive legislation of the Coalition! Fight for political strikes, sit-ins, occupations, street action and mass protest against the Coalition offensive!

* Stop the cuts!

* For an immediate programme of public works for the unemployed at union rates!

* Cancel all military spending and impose steeply progressive taxes on the rich and on capital!

* Open the books of companies demanding redundancies! Occupy all factories threatening closure in order to enforce nationalisation under workers' control without compensation to

the bosses!

- * Force the bosses and state to index all wages and benefits to inflation and to implement a legal national minimum wage and benefit level to be adjusted by the unions under rank and file control! Bring forward all catch-up claims now!
- * Cancel the Debt to imperialist financiers!
- * **FORCE LABOUR OUT OF COALITION NOW!**
- * Stop the Criminal Justice Bill in the South!
- * The trade unions must force the Northern state to dismantle all the institutions of discrimination against Catholic workers!
- * For British Troops Out Now! Disarm and disband the RUC and UDR!

WHAT KIND OF PARTY?

- * Win the unions to enforce the demands of the rank and file on the Labour Party, by fighting for union conferences of lay delegates to debate what kind of party the working class needs!
- * In order to destroy the bureaucracy's ability to use Labour (or Workers Party) as instruments to divert or destroy workers' struggles, we must **FORCE** the union leaders to **FIGHT** to make the Labour Party accountable to the rank and file of the organised working class, through clear and specific norms of workers' democracy:
 1. representation at Labour conferences by accountable delegates of the unions casting their votes not as a block but in proportion to the support at rank-and-file controlled union conferences.
 2. election and recallability of all leaders of the Party by Conference, allowing them to keep no more for their salaries than the average wage; votes at Party Conference only for elected and accountable delegates of union and party organisations.
 3. Candidates for council and parliamentary elections to be democratically selected by the Party rank and file and recallable by them.
 4. Open the Labour Party to affiliation of all socialist political tendencies committed to struggles of the class - with full freedom of propaganda in a democratic party, and unity in all action not against the class interest. No bans or proscriptions!

Only in the fight for these demands can militants draw the lesson in practice for the rank and file that the treachery of Labour lies in its reformist politics - which put the survival of the bourgeois state and capitalist order before the needs of the working class in the last analysis.

Only thus can workers be confronted with the need for a mass **REVOLUTIONARY** party that is genuinely of and for the working class in its struggle to settle accounts with the bourgeoisie.

- * Fight to maintain and develop political levies in all unions, putting them under the control of a fighting national union movement accountable at every level to the rank and file.
- * Fight to make the question of Labour's role a key to the more important debate of what kind of Party is really needed.

Whenever the demand is raised to force Labour out of Coalition, the question is put as to who will then govern? Until an independent working class party is built which has won the allegiance of the class in struggle, the bourgeois parties

will continue to attempt to impose their rule. But the fight for the mass organisations to build such a party cannot even begin as long as they give any credence to the doctrine shared by both Labour and the Workers Party that they have a "responsibility" to ensure the existence of "stable government", in the interests of capitalist "democracy". Coalition with or political support for governments of the capitalist parties must be ruled out as a matter of **PRINCIPLE** if the road of **STRUGGLE**, as opposed to that of class collaboration, is to be opened up.

Revolutionary communists address the question of Government which is raised in the fight to force Labour out of Coalition by arguing:

- * Fight to make every working class deputy use the parliament and councils strictly to serve the needs of working class struggle, to smash the capitalist offensive and establish a Workers Government as a transition to the workers state.

Such a Workers (and Small Farmers) Government we argue, must be one directly accountable to the democratic Action Councils and mobilised trade union organisations of the class. It must stand over every gain of the masses in struggle. It must begin to dismantle the coercive apparatus of the ruling class.

The fight for such a Workers Government can be a means of uniting revolutionary workers in struggle with those who still believe in working class rule through a bourgeois parliament. Such militant but non-revolutionary workers would still have to be won to understand that the rule of the capitalist state operates outside of parliament through the "security" forces, the judiciary, and the executive power deployed without any public accountability by civil servants, bankers, big capitalists, police and army chiefs and their paymasters and cronies including the church hierarchies.

The experience of struggle for such a Workers Government would (possibly without having to actually create such a Government) prove in practice that it is impossible to defend the gains of the working class as long as the institutions of bourgeois rule survive - army, police, Special Branch, courts, judiciary, parliament, senior civil service etc., along with the continued private and transnational ownership of the major means of production.

Therefore communists fight to weld the vanguard of the class into a mass revolutionary workers' Party to make the fight for the Workers Government into a step by revolutionary and non-revolutionary militants towards the overthrow of the capitalist state, the expropriation of capital, the creation of a state monopoly of foreign trade and a democratically planned economy in a state ruled by the armed democratic councils of the working class. Such a state of dictatorship by the working class over the remnants of the bourgeoisie would rigorously impose all the norms of workers democracy in councils and Party, in state apparatus and militias, as a vital guarantee against the kind of bureaucratic degeneration that today blocks the road to socialism in the USSR and the other workers states. Such a revolutionary workers' state would give unconditional support to the struggles of workers and oppressed peoples throughout the world - as a step to international socialism.

Solidarity with the Miners!

On a four day visit to Galway and Dublin, organised by the Irish Workers Group, Colin Ward, chairman of the Keresley strike committee and Barbara Ward of the Keresley women's support committee, addressed Trade Unionists in a number of workplaces. These direct contacts won a powerful response with on the spot collections amounting to almost 500 punts and pledges of more to come - some since forwarded to Keresley.

Forty people turned out to a public meeting in Galway to discuss the issues of the strike. On the Pat Kenny show on Radio One, the two visitors spelt out the determination of the miners and their families and explained how the Coal Board had been responsible for provoking the strike by closing Corton Wood.

Ninety people attended and IWG public meeting in Dublin in the Marine Port and General Workers Union hall. They debated the issues of solidarity, the role of women, the support of the ethnic groups, picket defence and the general strike. The debate, though sharp at times, with three more Coventry miners arriving unexpectedly to join the platform, was a model of open democratic debate in stark contrast to the public meeting of activists held by the Trades Council where all debate was brazenly suppressed.

However, no-one at all attended from any of the centrist groups, SWM, PD, LWR or from Militant - all of whom were sent notices of the meeting. Previous offers of platforms at our meetings to debate issues have met with sectarian silence from these groups.

Three resolutions were adopted at this meeting on a unanimous show of hands. The meeting condemned the Dublin Government's prosecution of Welsh miners



Colin & Barbara Ward address canteen meeting in Galway.

for collecting without a permit and also demanded the return of the seized money to the NUM. Secondly, it protested against the presence of the Special Branch outside the meeting place. Finally, it called on the Dublin Trades Council to open up its solidarity work by organising regular meetings for union activists from the city's workplaces. A public statement explaining these motions was sent to the papers but only carried in the Irish Times. The Trades Council did not reply to a letter outlining the call from this meeting. The Labour leader cum Tanaiste's office acknowledged receipt of a letter demanding the refund to the NUM and condemning the political use of the police against union activists and socialists which his Coalition Government presides over.

DUBLIN TRADES COUNCIL

On July 30th a public meeting of 300 socialists and trade union activists welcomed Ann Scargill and other Barnsley women supporters of the NUM struggle to Dublin. Their direct appeal for urgent financial aid was applauded and 500 pounds was collected on the spot. Ann Scargill's claim that a petition from NUM women to the Queen would have a big impact was heard in polite and sceptical silence.

But even much more important issues than this detail of the struggle were not to be allowed any discussion. In what must be one of the most blatant and outrageous acts of bureaucracy at any meeting of its kind, Des Bonass of the Trades Council Executive CLOSED THE MEETING IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE COLLECTION - AT 9.15. Normally, meetings of this kind go on till 10 or 10.30. The audience of activists wanted and NEEDED an open discussion to develop solidarity with the NUM - and after digging into their pockets on the spot for 500 pounds this deliberate suppression of their views was the ultimate in bureaucratic contempt for them. We not only condemn now the action of the DCTU and of all on the platform who colluded with it - the IWG were the only ones in the hall to get up and protest loudly and clearly. Not a peep of support was heard from any of the other very many "left" groups represented. The platform party rose and a dismayed crowd was hurried out of the hall.

The petty local bureaucrats of the Trades Council like to reflect prestige on themselves by association with solidarity campaigns, to be photographed as cheques are presented. They resist all rank and file initiative or involvement in practical solidarity. They are terrified especially of the political solidarity of fraternal and open debate of the issues! Their attempted bureaucratic control of solidarity collections in Dublin has been disastrous in practice. Time and again during the visit of Keresley miners sponsored by IWG 'leaving it to the Trades Council' was cited as a reason for some local stewards initial reluctance to meet the delegates, and for the failure to take up anything more than once-off collections. Through extending its umbrella to other Trades Councils around the country Kearney, Nolan, Bonass & Co. of the Dublin Trades Council may improve their image in the media but have seriously choked real solidarity which NEEDS rank and file initiative and control.

MERRIGAN'S SPEECH

On the Trades Council platform also was the new president of the Congress, Matt Merrigan. He was vehement in his demand that the British labour movement should take off the gloves with Thatcher, whom he correctly described as a conscious class warrior, should fight to save the pits and take up socialist politics that would ensure the British establishment would never again try such an offensive on the working class. As usual Brother

Merrigan's rhetoric was barren of concrete calls to action. Like Scargill's call for "total physical support", both EVADE the unambiguous call for solidarity STRIKE action on a mass basis and the fight for the general strike to smash the anti-union laws. Nor can Merrigan absolve his vagueness on the basis of distance from the issue. The anti-union laws are a dagger also at a third of the ICTU membership - in the Six Counties. Alone on the Irish left since 1979 the IWG has insisted on the need to fight for the the general strike in the north alongside the British workers to smash these laws.

NORTHERN WORKERS AND THE MINERS

It is no surprise that this aspect of the present struggle - in which these noxious laws have become a key issue - has consistently been avoided by the ICTU which is up to its eyes in collusion with the Six County state. The day after Merrigan's speech (which the media failed to report despite his claim that the standards of the Irish media were a cut above those of the British!) Terry Carlin of the Northern Ireland Committee of the ICTU pleaded with Jim Prior to exempt the North from the anti-union laws (I.Times 2/8/82). His plea was two-fold. He warned that the threat to the closed shop could enable the creation of sectarian breakaway unions, and he pleaded that such laws were not warranted in the North because they had the "best industrial record" after Japan! Carlin and the NIC-ICTU must be forcibly reminded that this is the "record" of bureaucratic grovelling which has meant no resistance to a capitalist offensive that has inflicted an incredible 21% average unemployment - announced in the same week.

The failure of Belfast dockers to heed calls for blacking of coal at the start of the NUM strike, and the decisions at Belfast and Larne in the second round of the U.K. Docks Strike are shameful. NOT ONE SINGLE VOTE was cast among Belfast dockers in favour of the strike, and at Larne ONLY one single vote. "Mr Sam McVeigh, a docks official of the ITGWU said... How could they be expected to support the miners who were wanting to protect their jobs, when jobs could possibly be lost here?" (I.Times 28/8/84)

Jaruzelski Scabs on NUM

At every stage of the six-month British miners' strike the bosses have sought to break the strike by importing Polish coal which at the same time earns foreign currency to prop up the Jaruzelski military regime. Arthur Scargill has never hidden his preference for that regime - and its fake unions - in its struggle against the Solidarnosc trade union. He distanced the NUM from Solidarnosc in its periods of open activity, though many NUM

S.F. Silent...

Despite visits of miners to Sinn Fein in Belfast, despite Adams' mention of solidarity with the miners in a speech, Sinn Fein has shamefully ignored the strike in their press - only a tiny piece on Ann Scargill's visit in six months. So much for their "socialism"! It does not take a socialist, either, to see that the struggle of the miners is a powerful challenge to the common enemy of Irish revolutionary nationalists - a blow at the British state. But Sinn Fein has not made it an issue for mobilising solidarity with the miners. Given their hegemony over one section of the North's working class, they must therefore share in the responsibility, along with the union bureaucrats, for the shameful outcome on the question of solidarity in the North's docks.

A year ago the IWG condemned Sinn Fein's abstentionism as moralistic and fake intransigence. We argued for the demand to be placed on elected Sinn Fein representatives to take their seats - especially in the House of Commons - and use the public parliamentary platforms "to win the widest possible focus, not for token statements but for a bold call to action to the entire proletariat of both islands! The claim that such participation would "legitimise" the institutions of imperialist rule is rubbish. It is nothing more than a confession, by those who make it, of their own inability and unwillingness to issue such a call to action!" Put Sinn Fein to the test, we argued. If they seriously champion workers' interests they will fight to prove also to Protestant workers that "the fighters against British Rule are defending our interests, our jobs, our trade unions against the onslaught of Thatcher, Tebbit, Prior and the bosses" (quotes from Class Struggle No. 12, p.5). Sinn Fein's attitude to the Miners' struggle exposes their political bankruptcy and the sham nature of their claim to be a socialist party for the working class.

areas did not share his stand. Back in May he claimed that the official Polish unions were repaying him by supporting a coal blockade. Nothing of the sort has happened. Successive NUM delegations have left the Polish embassy tight lipped and empty handed. Unlike Jaruzelski's fake unions, Solidarnosc units in Poland's coalfields have come out in support of the NUM. We reprint one of their resolutions.

RESOLUTION BY UNDERGROUND SOLIDARITY IN MAZOWSZE REGION

For four months the British miners have been on strike against a programme of mass closures of mines for economic reasons. The miners are threatened with unemployment. The government has rejected compromise solutions and has resorted to severe police methods against the strikers. Thousands of miners have been arrested; hundreds have been hospitalised and one has been killed.

The government of the Polish People's Republic, despite hypocritical condemnations of the activities of the British police in the columns of the regime press and by the

regime's pseudo-trade unionists, is profiting from the export of coal to Britain. It sells dirt cheap coal which has been mined in scandalously neglected working conditions and with reckless exploitation of the labour force and the coal field. The slave labour of the Polish miner serves to break the resistance of the British miner.

British miners! The true sentiments of Polish trade unionists towards the authorities of the Polish People's Republic and their practices was shown in the recent electoral farce which was boycotted by the

workers. In the prevailing conditions of terror, the Polish workers' movement is at present not in a position to undertake protest actions. But you may be certain that as you have supported and are supporting our struggle, so we are in solidarity with you. We strongly oppose every case where force is used against workers struggling for their rights and interests.

Long Live Trade Union Solidarity!

Warsaw, 26 June 1984

James Connolly's Legacy Part 2

The Populist Dimension of Connolly's 'Republican Socialism'

"But the palm of honour for the clearest exposition of the doctrine of revolution, social and political, must be given to James Fintan Lalor, of Tenakill, Queen's County. ... The working-class democracy of Ireland ... would be uselessly acquiescing in the smirching of its own record, were it to permit emasculation of the message of this Irish apostle of Revolutionary Socialism." - James Connolly in "Labour in Irish History", Ch.14.

The first article in this series examined the Marxism of the British Social Democratic Federation, the orthodoxy in which Connolly served his political apprenticeship. There we saw a number of key features of his thought - over-reliance on a version of Marxism couched in terms of economic reductionism and failure to grasp the more general method of historical materialism.

We argued that even at the level of political economy the SDF was seriously flawed. Thus, for example, the non-marxist belief that the crisis of capitalism arose from underconsumption wrongly took the place of Marx's understanding that capitalist crisis was rooted in the sphere of production. "Underconsumptionism" led to different sets of conclusions, and in the case of Connolly, to the belief that the 'home market' is inherently too 'small' to absorb the social product and hence it is impossible for an Irish capitalist class to emerge, given the existence of foreign competition and the saturated nature of foreign markets. Such facts, Marxists argue, while they may be features of capitalist crisis, are not in themselves the essence of the crises. In the case of Connolly these views were developed along lines similar to the classical Populist tradition, the tradition which Lenin sharply attacked in its Russian form - the Narodniks.

It is necessary to deal with other equally important aspects of Connolly's political evolution in the 1890s in a 'populist' direction to show that this error in economic theory is by no means incidental or irrelevant to his thought as a whole. In this article we will be concentrating on the Irish populism of James Fintan Lalor (1807-1849) which had a seminal influence on Connolly's thought through his comradeship in Scotland with the socialist and former Fenian John Leslie (1859-1921). Leslie helped lay down the lines of Connolly's break with orthodox Marxism on the national question, though admittedly an ossified Marxism in the case of the SDF.

This break was not rooted in any concrete understanding of the different tasks to be accomplished in the Irish revolution. It was

innovative in that it suggested a linking together of the national struggle and the struggle for socialism. This has led many 'far left' commentators to assume that Connolly's perspective was similar to Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution. However, precisely the manner in which Connolly attempted to link these questions, after the method of Fintan Lalor's populism and his own cothinker John Leslie, challenges that assumption. 'Link them' he certainly did, but in a way that telescopes and fuses, or more accurately confuses, bourgeois-democratic questions (national independence and the land question) with the question of socialism.

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE INNOVATIONS OF LESLIE AND CONNOLLY

The pressure to develop a new analysis of the Irish Question came from the Irish immigrant population in Edinburgh in the early 1890s. Since Keir Hardie's Independent Labour Party (ILP) had begun to engage in "political action" with the support of the Edinburgh Marxists in the Scottish Socialist Federation (SSF), they came up against the Liberals, Tories and Irish middle-class Nationalists. The Nationalists, where they did not have a candidate of their own in elections, opposed the Scottish socialists in particular as long as their position on Ireland remained no different to that of the Liberals, merely following the passive SDF line "legislative independence" for Ireland. The fall of Parnell followed by the defeat of the second Home Rule Bill and collapse of Gladstone's government created a new situation by March 1894. It wracked the Home Rule movement with divisions.

Home Rule appeared at the time, in Leslie's words, to be a "dissolving view". He therefore made a bold effort to address the new political context with an analysis that would, he hoped, be the basis for splitting the Irish immigrant workers away from their erstwhile "gentlemen" Nationalist leaders, as well as being the basis for future organisation among the Irish urban workers and rural proletariat. Leslie's analysis was published as a series of articles from March to May 1894 in "Justice", the organ of the Social Democratic Federation. Later the articles were compiled into a pamphlet, "The Irish Question".

At the heart of Leslie's suggestive analysis, soon to be developed schematically by Connolly, was an attempt to give to the National Question a social plebeian character by "hitching" it to the revolutionary dynamic of the most oppressed class. Leslie's attempt to give Irish nationalism and the national question a social revolutionary content took its inspiration from the agrarian revolutionary ideas of James Fintan Lalor. In the years 1847-48 Lalor developed the argument that in order for the Irish to achieve "the conquest of our liberties" it was necessary to first achieve "the re-conquest of our lands". In other words national independence would come when the peasantry threw off the yoke of English landlordism and restored the soil to the "people". Leslie, in the context of the 1890s, attempted to develop this idea by substituting the rural and urban proletariat for the peasantry as a whole as the class whose interest genuinely lay at the root of the NATIONAL struggle. Leslie argued that the laws of capitalism had by then taken possession of Irish agriculture (he makes little reference to industry despite the advanced development of the north-east) and polarised the countryside fully between proletariat and capitalists. Thus he suggested the reconquest of the soil by the Irish urban and rural workers would simultaneously free the nation and circumvent any further capitalist development, thereby inaugurating Irish socialism. In this manner he telescoped the national question, the land question and the struggle for socialism into a 'combined' overall goal.

THE CAPITALIST BASIS OF THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Before examining this theme more fully we must point out why Leslie's innovation was a departure from Marxism. It is understandable that he wished to get over the orthodoxy of the SDF. Under Hyndman the concept of legislative independence for Ireland did not recognise the right to full secession from the British state, merely a limited autonomy. Moreover, such was the degree of adaptation by various social democratic (formally Marxist) parties to their existing national capitalist states in the period of nascent European imperialist rivalry that some elements of them believed that 'civilisation' could only enter the backward undeveloped world through imperialism. This adaptation, attempting to make imperialism more benevolent and peaceable, took root in the mainstream of the SDF's practice. There was little place in it for the view that national struggles of oppressed countries had a progressive content.

Having said this, however, the distorted SDF position still rested on the orthodox and valid Marxist understanding of the national question. In the economic sphere this meant the rise of a territorially specific manufacturing bourgeoisie which creates a home market on the basis of a unified and independent NATION STATE. Politically it meant that the bourgeoisie overthrew the old order and established its rule over all other classes within the confines of its own creation, the nation state. It rested its formally democratic parliament on a state apparatus which could be relied upon to defend the social relations of capitalist exploitation, in the last analysis through its monopoly of armed force.

Thus the question of CAPITAL lies at the heart of the struggle to establish the independent unified nation state. This remains valid even though in the epoch of twentieth century imperialism the

native colonial or semi-colonial bourgeoisie is not capable of leading genuine economic development because it is subordinated through finance capital to the interests of the metropolitan imperialist powers.

Marx, writing in 1867 in Britain, championed the fight among the English working class for the right of Ireland to full secession from the oppressive colonial Act of Union of 1800. This would, he argued, enable the workers of Britain to free themselves of the imperial chauvinism of their ruling class. It would enable the Irish to establish "self-government" and open the struggle for "an agrarian revolution" as well as establishing "protective tariffs against England" (Marx & Engels - Ireland and the Irish Question, Progress 1978, p.158). These would be the best conditions for the development of Irish capitalism and the uprise of the working class in Ireland which could link its class struggle for socialism with that of their immediate brothers and sisters - the working class of Britain. In this dialectical sense the working class had a keen interest in ending national oppression.

The struggle for an Irish Nation State originated not in the misty past or in the land question as such but in the 18th century. It reached heroic proportions in the last decades of that century by uniting many sections - peasants, merchants etc. together under the lead of the rising manufacturing bourgeoisie. It rose above religious divisions and, in the person of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen, it genuinely sought a modern national democratic and clearly BOURGEOIS republic. Moreover, although the "men of no property" were referred to by Tone and were prepared to fight, his goal was that of the progressive Irish bourgeoisie of the time. The thwarting of that revolution by semi-feudal landlordism, Orangeism and the English ruling class was a profound defeat. But even in the new century a bourgeois liberal nationalist movement re-emerged under the pragmatic leadership of O'Connell, equipped with new slogans of a national character.

In this strict sense there is, therefore, a continuity between heroic figures of the 1798 Jacobin tradition of Wolfe Tone before the Act of Union, the cautious and conservative leaders of the nineteenth century Repeal and Home Rule movements and the twentieth century Sinn Féin. To overlook the central importance of the BOURGEOISIE in defining the National Question and to attempt to redefine it around the class interest of the most oppressed class, whether the peasantry or later the working class, was wrong.

Engels, writing in 1882, was aware of the different trends in the movement in Ireland as well as their limitations:

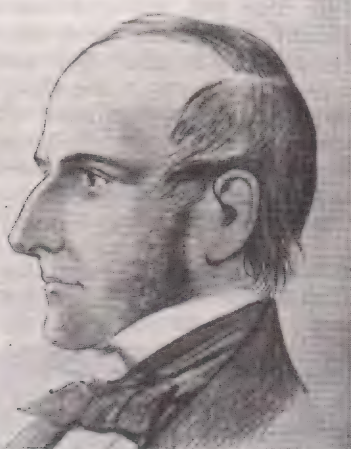
In Ireland there are two trends in the movement. The first, the earlier, is the agrarian which stems from the organised brigandage practised with the support of the peasants and the clan chiefs dispossessed by the English, and also by the big Catholic landowners (in the 17th century these brigands were called Tories ...)

... all of this is as old as the present English landownership in Ireland, that is, dates back to the end of the 17th century at the latest... But as regards its nature, it is local, isolated and can never become a general form of political struggle.

Engels continues:

Soon after the establishment of the union in 1800 began the LIBERAL-NATIONAL opposition of the URBAN BOURGEOISIE which, as in every peasant country with dwindling townlets ... finds its natural leaders in lawyers. These also need the peasants. They therefore had to find slogans to attract the peasants. Thus O'CONNELL discovered such a slogan first in the CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION and then in the REPEAL OF THE UNION. ... After the American civil war, Fenianism took its place beside these two trends. (Engels to Bernstein, 26/6/1882, in 'Marx and Engels - Ireland and the Irish Question p.451 ff.)

In Engels' analysis it was the bourgeoisie that developed national slogans to rally the support of the peasantry, while movements arising out of the agrarian question never accomplished the task of generalising to the level of a national political struggle. This is confirmed by the understanding of the rural petty bourgeoisie as a vacillating social mass which is pulled and pushed by the external power of the urban-centred classes. Historically this is so because the development of capitalism leads to a differentiation within the peasantry into bourgeois (labour-hiring) peasants, petit-bourgeois middle peasants and semi-proletarian poor peasants. The peasantry as a whole, therefore, opposes semi-feudal landlordism, but it becomes divided increasingly as capitalism penetrates into agriculture. It cannot rise to the level of a ruling class, the condition for solving major political tasks, but the peasantry remains a key factor in the struggles for power by the capitalist class or the modern working class.



James Fintan Lalor

LESLIE TURNS TO LALOR

The mistake in John Leslie's analysis was to drop from sight the essential interest of a native capitalist class in solving the national question. Instead of recognising in Tone the classic Irish Jacobin BOURGEOIS revolutionary, that is, the essence of the NATIONAL revolutionary, Leslie reduces the national question to the interests of the most socially oppressed class and hence looks to the ideas of James Fintan Lalor, "the man who first pointed out the class nature of the Irish movement" (The Irish Question, p.5.)

Lalor was not a bourgeois revolutionary in the classic mould but a populist, analogous to the Russian populists or Narodniki. By this we mean that he based himself on the peasantry and that he sought to place the land in their possession in such a form that "capitalism" could be AVOIDED.

Fintan Lalor's own original contribution consisted in the attempt to transform in a SOCIAL REVOLUTIONARY direction the purely putschist Republicanism of the Young Irelanders (William Smith O'Brien, 1803-64, Charles Gavan Duffy, 1816-1903, Thomas Francis Meagher, 1823-67). That is, he aimed to tap the explosive hatred of the Irish tenants for the English "garrison" of landlords and make the peasantry the locomotive of revolution taking in tow the struggle for a national independent Republic. The inspirational power and novelty of this redefinition of Republican methods is in no way vitiated by the fact that Lalor had no practical success in making it a mass aim of mobilised tenants.

However, while the Young Ireland movement had broken from O'Connell's Repeal Movement, as did Lalor himself, Young Ireland was in the fullest sense the descendant of Tone - national, secular and urban-bourgeois, whereas Lalor had always been involved in some form with a programme for the peasantry. In the throes of the great famine Lalor stood out in opposition to Whig (Liberal) policies of 'laissez faire' which directly aided the export of cash crops from the country while the mass of poor peasants and rural labourers died of starvation. This gave to Lalor the appearance of an anti-capitalist social revolutionary. This "anti-capitalism" nevertheless was based NOT on the class interests of the proletariat, even the rural proletariat, but on "the people", meaning the peasantry. The prime immediate target of his revolutionary strategy was the English landlords, a semi-feudal class. He redefined the essence of the National Question thus:

It is a mere question between a people and a class - between a people of 8 million and a class of 8,000. (Marlowe, "Collected Writings of James Fintan Lalor", p.59.)

As for the leading role he ascribed to the peasantry, he wrote that the goal was:

"not to resume or restore an old constitution but to found a new nation and raise up a free people, and strong as well as free, and secure as well as strong, based on a peasantry rooted like rocks in the soil of the land - this is my object"

(Readings from J.F.Lalor, Belfast Republican Centre 1975 p.68).

THE UTOPIA OF POPULISM

Lalor's programme is aimed at a utopia, a society that can never exist in real history, but based on the idealisation of petty commodity production by peasants and artisans free from the crushing competition of capitalism or the tyrannical oppression of landlordism and usury. At the same time, these commodity producers are NOT equivalent to the propertyless urban proletariat created by capitalism, and therefore characteristically are incapable of breaking from capitalism, a system of generalised commodity production. Lalor reflected and expressed these illusions well when he wrote nostalgically of the fate of the petty bourgeoisie in previous times:

"The masters in those days were only small capitalists, as each man endeavoured to be one, but they were sure of independence, for they did not believe that their goods depended on unlimited production, and hence ruinous competition, but on the income of the country - on the fact of the people, the masses, possessing wealth. It is not the few rich in a country which consumes the products of labour - they only consume luxuries and these luxuries must always

give but a precarious employment - it is the diffusion of wealth among the population generally which regulates the demand and ensures the labourers from sudden and ruinous fluctuations; and this system of numerous small manufacturers produced the result. (Lalor, from Marlowe ed. p.109.)

Lalor equated the new system of capitalism in England with that of the "landlord thugs". His criticisms of capitalism reflect the crushing oppression of the Irish peasantry at the hands of both Landlordism and the 'laissez faire' industrial capitalist system in England. He explicitly follows the line of argument of the romantic economist Simonde de Sismondi (1773-1842), the critic of untrammelled industrial capitalism. Sismondi, as well as holding a one-sided under-consumptionist theory of capitalist crisis for which Marx attacked him, leaned essentially in a backward-looking direction. He sought to introduce strict regulation of competition and looked back towards feudalism rather than forward to the working class and socialism.

Lalor attacks Ricardo, the theoretician and defender of the industrial bourgeoisie. He vituperates against England's industrial revolution for having "blasted" the population with "true pauperism" "in all its unmitigated horrors". Along with this horror of industrial capitalism goes his horror of the working class! He writes:

This class, resembling the Proletarii of the Roman Empire, is increasing with fearful rapidity, and will one day revenge all the wrongs on their oppressors, but will also, it is feared, destroy society itself. This class may be called the DESTITUTE, to distinguish them from the general poor". (ibid p.100.)

In this shape Lalor wishes to AVOID capitalism, and while this goal is in itself UTOPIAN, his programme for a "moral insurrection" against landlordism, based on a rent strike, resistance to evictions and seizures of corn stores by the mobilised tenantry, in spite of contradictions, could have opened a struggle to smash English landlordism. As such it contained components of a revolutionary democratic programme and would if implemented have become part of the means of freeing Irish CAPITALISM from the obstacles of the semi-feudal aristocracy. As such, in hindsight, it can be correctly understood as potentially an alternative approach to completing the bourgeois-democratic task of ending feudal relations in the land - an alternative to gradual land reform from above. It would have accelerated the emergence of capitalism from within the peasantry.

Lalor's fear of the proletariat is worked into his plan for insurrection. In his plans for the Felon Clubs he wrote in the spring of 1847:

As a matter of fact no man will offer himself, or be accepted as a member, unless he holds our principles and unless he is prepared to arm and fight in support of them when called upon. But this will not be enough, else a common labourer unable to read or write would be eligible... It is not the common labourer but the skilled labourer we desire to engage and organise in this club. ("The First Step" - Fogarty, ed. p.86-7.)

Nevertheless, Lalor's programme was LAND-centred and directed towards a utopian, peasant-based Republic which took little or no account of the key significance of capital in the Irish economy. He explicitly sought to avoid the social

relations of capitalism. He believed in a solution to the land question that excluded the rise of an industrial bourgeoisie. Further, he believed the land struggle would, like an engine pulling a carriage, entail the solution of the national question. He was doubly wrong. It was historically impossible to write the bourgeoisie out of the solution to the national question. This was even more true when viewed from the standpoint of a peasant struggle around the land question. The land struggle by the peasantry could never take the form of a "general political movement without a leading role for one of the modern urban classes created by capitalism.

Given the wholesale decimation of the rural proletariat and cottier class by famine and emigration, given the immaturity of the modern proletariat scattered throughout the South (only in the north east was it developing in a concentrated way) it was inevitable that the peasantry, after the failure to rise in 1848, would again tend to fall under the hegemony of lawyers (such as Isaac Butt), the "natural" representatives of the urban bourgeoisie. Lalor's prognosis of a peasant proprietary as the basis for avoiding capitalist social relations, was shown to be wholly utopian by later events. For, the mass land struggle of 1879-82, in which the peasantry took up some of his programme, set in train the consolidation of conservative, Catholic, nationalist, capitalist and middle-peasant farming classes.

The Marxist tradition, therefore, characterises Lalor as an agrarian populist, a revolutionary against landlordism yes, but a utopian who sought to avoid industrial capitalism and who was blind to the internal dynamic of capitalism within the Irish peasantry. He stands outside the classic bourgeois revolutionary tradition of the late eighteenth century because he places at the heart of his programme the ownership of the land and not the national and independent rule of a rising industrial bourgeoisie.

Lalor stands outside the socialist tradition, too, specifically the modern scientific socialism established by Marx and Engels in the same few years as Lalor argued his programme. Instead, Lalor looked backwards and feared the rising proletariat. Objectively his programme defended PRIVATE property in the means of production. Even if he was for "land nationalisation", as some have argued, this was only in the sense of expropriating landlords, and thus it was at most a radical bourgeois demand.

LESLIE TAKES ABOARD LALOR'S POPULISM

Leslie, under pressure to overcome the political rivalry of Irish bourgeois nationalists in the 1890s, pressed the ideas of Lalor into service in an attempt to create a new political synthesis. Essentially this meant using Lalor to postulate, as against urban bourgeois nationalism, a different supposedly more VALID strand in Irish nationalism. But Leslie, as a socialist, was also at pains to orientate to the working class. In the ideas and record of Lalor he found a double-edged sword.

In Lalor's critique of O'Connell's Repeal movement and his 'social revolutionary' approach to Independence, Leslie found what he thought was the perfect analogy for his own criticisms of the Home

Rule movement and the model for a social-revolutionary redefinition of the Irish Question in the 1890s. But he ignored or did not understand the bourgeois limitations of Lalor's programme. In fact he saw Lalor as an opponent of capitalism and an exponent of the "working class's point of view". Furthermore, he uncritically fused this "point of view" with PATRIOTISM.

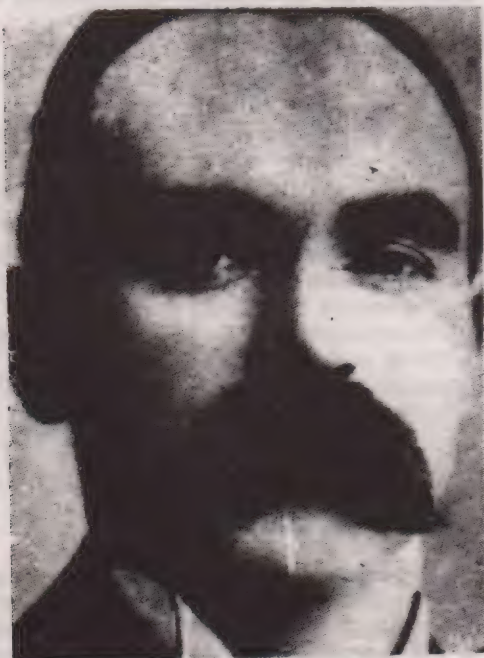
After selective (and modified) quotations from two of Lalor's articles, steering clear of any references by Lalor to the "fearful" "proletarii", Leslie attacked the rest of the Young Irelanders and Mitchell for their anti-Jacquerie and anti-socialist beliefs and continued:

"This is evidence enough that the men of '48, despite (sic) their patriotism, were from the working class point of view, not much better if any than those they rebelled against, and that it was as hopeless to expect from them a true definition of the rightful basis of property, as from the English governing classes themselves. Not but that a few did see it with Lalor, but they were as voices crying in the wilderness." (The Irish Question p.6.)

This gave Leslie a critical edge of sorts against what he mistakenly saw as the "dissolving view" of Home Rule and against the middle class fragments of the Home Rule movement of the 1890s, divided over Parnell. In looking to Lalor he believed he could challenge these nationalists without thereby standing outside the nationalist tradition itself. Lalor's break with the Repeal movement, in Leslie's view, paralleled his own attempt to shake loose from the Home Rule movement and yet still remain within the nationalist tradition in the name of a more militant and plebeian patriotism.

This was quite a turnaround, for he had uncritically hailed the all-class Land League and Home Rule movement under Parnell. He interpreted Parnell's role in the "Kilmainham Treaty" without reference to his bourgeois politics and merely as an error of judgement.

"Gladstone never did a cleverer piece of work in his life, and that is saying a great deal. To this day it is problematical if Mr. Parnell fully



James Connolly - influenced by John Leslie

understood the land question; certainly his sudden acceptance of some vague nationalisation scheme during the stormy period that closed his remarkable career, while previously he would not hear of it, tends to show that he did not understand it."

Leslie now proceeded to develop an abstract perspective for the 'town and country toilers' completely counterposed to the post-Parnell Home Rulers. The repossession of the SOIL would place SOCIALISM on the agenda as the very condition for national independence and industrialisation.

The first step in his argument is based on a misinterpretation of the populist demand of Lalor - land to the peasants - as an intrinsically anti-capitalist measure. Even if we interpret Lalor's anti-Landlord programme as a form of "nationalisation of the land", Marx leaves us in no doubt but that it belongs to the bourgeois democratic programme. Marx explained that this demand expropriates the feudal landlords, abolishes "absolute" ground rent and at the same time breaks their power to appropriate a portion of the profits generated by the occupiers of the land. (See in this connection Marx's article "The Indian Question - Irish Tenant Right" from the New York Daily Tribune, 11 July 1853. Reproduced in Marx & Engels - Ireland and the Irish Question, p.69.)

Lenin subsequently applied this theory concretely in the Russian Revolution. After 1905 he argued that Socialists should address the revolutionary BOURGEOIS strivings of the peasantry against the landed aristocracy with the slogan of Land Nationalisation. While such a demand avoided building a Chinese Wall between completing the bourgeois revolutionary tasks and the goal of socialist revolution, he was absolutely clear that it was not in itself a socialist slogan. It was a slogan of the most revolutionary democracy aimed against the landed Aristocracy. This was to be taken up ALONGSIDE the central bourgeois-democratic slogan against the autocracy - the Republic, and the Constituent Assembly to be convened by the committees of the masses. Thus he defined land nationalisation as:

"on the one hand a partial reform within the limits of capitalism (a change in the owners of a part of surplus value) and, on the other hand, it abolishes monopoly (landlordism - CS) which hinders the development of capitalism as a whole." (Lenin - The Agrarian Programme of Social Democracy in the First Russian Revolution, 1907. Progress, p.79.)

AVOIDING CAPITALISM

Leslie lacked this admittedly complex understanding of the land question. Coming as he did from involvement with the Land League (and Fenianism), subsequently through the school of British social democracy, and influenced in no small part by the abstract propagandism of William Morris for the socialist maximum, he simply adopted Lalor's radical populism to his own dream of creating in Ireland a socialist "Land and Labour League".

Having adopted Lalor as a socialist thinker Leslie goes on to give a very one-sided picture of capitalist development in post-famine Ireland, which was in his view confined to agriculture. For this he draws from a section in Vol. I of Das Kapital in which Marx referred to the substitution

"although manufacturing industry is in a relatively backward condition in Ireland, yet the law of capitalist accumulation and concentration is in full force and operation within agriculture and such manufactures as may be. Notwithstanding Gladstonian Land Bills, the concentration of lands with the decrease in the area of arable and increase in pasture land goes on apace..." (Leslie, Irish Question p.11).

Leslie was unjustified in his sweeping assertion. Engels himself in 1888 noted the slowdown in peasant depopulation in the process of land centralisation. The preponderance of the middle peasantry and the appetite for independent proprietorship among them made Engels less sanguine in his prognosis than Leslie. (See Interview with Engels in the New Yorker Volkzeitung in R.Dixon (ed.), Ireland and the Irish Question, N.Y. 1972).

But for the suppression of the Land League in 1882, Leslie continues, a Land and Labour League could have evolved out of it and, "there is little doubt but that (it) would have become one of the most formidable working class organisations in the world" (Irish Question p.12). He argues that such a departure was once again on the agenda in 1894.

Flowing inevitably from this analysis is the attempt to bypass the specific revolutionary bourgeois dynamic that still existed among the masses of peasant tenants against semi-feudal landlordism. Instead, he plots out a path in which the working class of town and country would "declare, as James Fintan Lalor did, that the emancipation of their class from economic bondage means the emancipation from all bondage; that the interests of their class are paramount and before the interests of all other classes in society. (Ibid p.14.)

In this manner he equates nationalisation of the land with the expropriation of capitalism and dismisses the rising farmer class with the old landlord class in an abstract and ultra-left muddle. Indeed, he echoes the populist utopianism of Lalor by arguing that the town and country working class could "have what is termed capital without the capitalist". His variant argues simplistically that the "Irish people" should not "call in the capitalist" but that they should, by repossessing the land, make a leap to Socialism, on the basis of which they may industrialise without the "pandemonium" of capitalist exploitation in "their fair island".

LESLIE'S FAILURE

Leslie fails to challenge Lalor's populist premise "that the enjoyment by the people of the right of first ownership of the soil is essential to the vigour and vitality of all other rights" (ibid. p.5), and "that the land question contains and the legislative question (i.e. Repeal - CS) does NOT contain, the materials from which victory is manufactured" (Readings from J.F.Lalor, Belfast, p.73). Instead, Leslie inserts the working class of town and country as the leading interest in the NATIONAL struggle where Lalor had appointed the peasantry. He wrongly suggests that nationalism redefined by changing its class content in this way need no longer be seen as a class limiting outlook of the Irish bourgeoisie and thereby an obstacle to the working-class fight for political independence, but instead becomes an intrinsically socialist movement.

While we may admire Leslie's effort to break through the traditional division of social democracy between its maximum programme for socialism and its minimum programme for immediate struggle which included tactical support for progressive bourgeois democratic demands, his achievement, however, does not even approximate to a scientific analysis of the Irish social formation. Lacking this, he could not progress towards the perspective of Permanent Revolution.

The epoch of imperialist decay then dawning was to mean that the bourgeoisie would no longer struggle consistently in a revolutionary manner for its own programme, and that its incompleteness would be a negative obstacle to the working class struggle against the bourgeoisie which could portray itself, even if only in rhetoric, as ally of the masses in opposition to imperialism and feudal remnants. Therefore the progressive elements of the bourgeois programme in which the masses had illusions would have to be tactically taken up and fought for by the working class in order to come to the head of the masses of the nation in the struggle for its own power. Such a method was ruled out by Leslie's synthesis of nationalism and socialism in which the bourgeois nationalisation of the land reconquered from the imperialists is equated with socialism. We writes off the progressive element of the Home Rule movement prematurely and outlines no perspective whereby socialists may tactically relate an independent working class movement to bourgeois or petty bourgeois nationalist movements.

Leslie's schemas might safely have been forgotten had it not been for their influence on Connolly through whom they were converted into a doctrine whose confusions have been compounded into the "socialist republicanism" which he still inspires.

CONNOLLY'S POPULIST DIMENSION

One of the first publications by Connolly when he came to Ireland in 1896 was an edited selection from Fintan Lalor's writings. The introduction to this pamphlet contains the following revealing statement:

"the Irish Socialist Republican Party, as the only political party which fully accepts Fintan Lalor's teaching, from his declaration of principles to his system of insurrection, hope that in issuing this pamphlet, they will succeed in bringing home to the minds of their fellows, a realisation of the necessity which exists for the creation of a party which will aim at giving effective political expression to the twin ideas of national and industrial freedom now so hopelessly divorced in the public life of Ireland". (Connolly (ed), "The rights of Ireland" and "Faith of a Felon." Introduction p.II.)

The influence of Lalor, through Leslie, surfaces clearly in the pamphlet Erin's Hope, written by Connolly and dating from 1897. In it, Connolly repeats Leslie's emphasis on the land, as opposed to the rise of Irish capitalism, as the historic basis of the national question.

The Irish question has, in fact, a much deeper source than a mere difference of opinion on forms of government. Its real origin and inner meaning lay in the circumstances that the two opposing nations held fundamentally different ideas upon

the vital question of property in land. (Erin's Hope. See O.D. Edwards & B. Ransom (editors), James Connolly - Selected Political Writings, pp172-73.)

In fact, far from recognising in the nascent colonial Irish bourgeoisie the basis of the various movements for independence, Connolly argues that the Irish middle class only served to SUBVERT this movement. The real content of the Irish movement, he argues, was fundamentally against private property. He refers to the ancient "clan system" with its basis in common landed property and portrays the CONQUEST as the attempted subversion of that principle by "feudal-capitalist" private property. With the "dispersion of the Irish clans" he says, "the demand for the common ownership of land naturally fell into abeyance". He goes on to say that "in the intervening period a new class had arisen - the 'Irish middle class'. But its role was purely that of an enemy within, based on 'the alien social septem' (capitalism) and serving only to bring about 'the legal dispossession and economic dependence of the vast mass of the Irish people, as part of the natural order of society' (ibid p.176).

On the basis of this analysis, inspired by Leslie's incorporation of Lalor's legacy, Connolly goes on to derive the conclusion that now the wheel has come full circle. He takes up Lalor's argument that the re-conquest of the land (which Connolly interprets as a demand for nationalisation of the land on a socialist basis) is now the sole basis for genuine national independence. He enlists arguments derived from his SDF background in economics - specifically the argument that markets are saturated world-wide and that Ireland is too poor to constitute a home market for its own industry. Incidentally ignoring the industrial northeast, he writes:

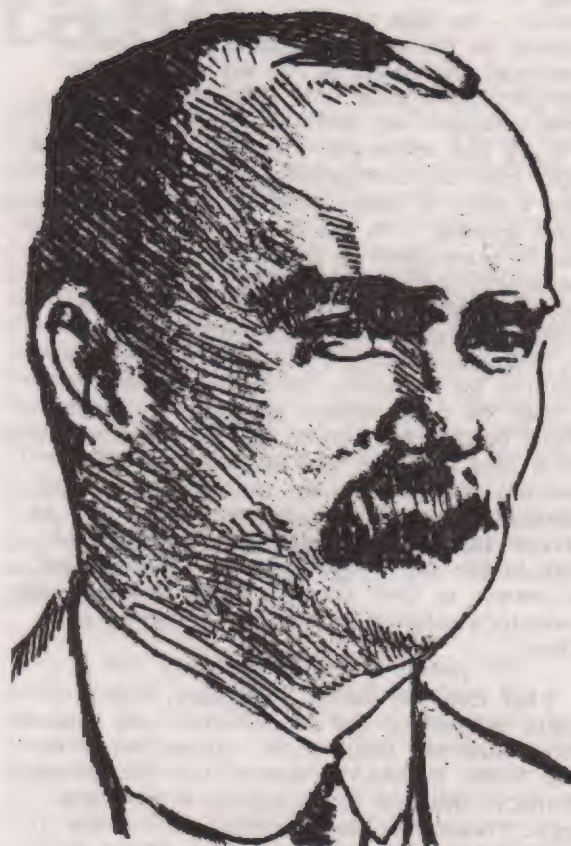
...tell me how poor Ireland, exhausted and drained of her life blood at every pore, with a population almost wholly agricultural and unused to mechanical pursuits, is to establish new factories, and where she is to find the customers to keep them going. She cannot find new markets. The world is only limited after all... (Ibid p.179).

These arguments combine to form the basis for Connolly's telescoping together of the "national, economic and social re-conquest" of Ireland all into one task. They form the basis for his dismissive attitude towards the nascent resurgence of Home Rule in 1898-99 under Redmond. They also lead Connolly to dismiss peasant proprietorship as a utopian ideal. Referring to new farm technology in the USA and Australia, he writes:

How are our small farmers to compete with a state of matters like this" (p.183) and:

The agriculture of Ireland can no longer compete with the scientifically equipped farmers of America, therefore the only hope is to abandon competition altogether as a rule of life, to organise agriculture as a public service under the control of boards of management elected by the agricultural population (no longer composed of farmers and labourers, but of free citizens with equal responsibility and equal honour) ..." (p.187)

From here Connolly, taking a leaf out of Leslie's book, argues the general schema based on the nationalisation of the land on collective principles and involving an agrarian-based 'socialism' as the very condition for national independence. Thus he argues:



Let the produce of the soil go first to feed the Irish people, and after a sufficient store has been retained to insure of that being accomplished let the surplus be exchanged with other countries in return for those manufactured goods Ireland needs but does not herself produce. Thus we will abolish at one stroke the dread of foreign competition and render perfectly needless any attempt to create an industrial hell in Ireland under the specious pretext of 'developing our resources' (p.187).

In this form Connolly believes he is addressing the combined problems of national, economic and social freedom in Ireland. But it is still constructed on the national terrain; it is a strongly autarchic programme for an isolated national system of production. In this respect the ultimate influence of Lalor on Connolly visibly draws him closer to the programme of petit-bourgeois revolutionary nationalism of the Pearse variety. Connolly believed that the uncompromising nationalist would inevitably turn to socialism for a solution "to the labyrinthine puzzle of modern economic conditions". But, through Lalor's populism, which Connolly mistakenly confuses with socialism, it is Connolly who in part liquidates the socialist principles into those of the petty bourgeoisie. This merging of theories could only make more difficult the task of breaking workers and small farmers from the hegemony of bourgeois nationalism.

At the same time as Connolly moves towards a merging of theories - the socialist with the nationalist - he fails to elaborate tactics capable of relating to the actual dynamics of the social and political movements of his day, namely the re-emergent Home Rule movement and the shift towards bourgeois and petit-bourgeois leadership. That is, he had no means whereby socialists could BREAK, from the bourgeoisie, the poor peasant farmers - many of whom were not yet covered by land purchase schemes - to the side of the proletariat. He had so telescoped the principles of national independence, and 'land to the tiller', into the socialist revolution itself that he could not deal tactically with each question as it dynamically arose, while connecting it clearly to the strategic perspective for socialism. His suggestion in Erin's Hope that the rural tenants oppressed by landlordism were doomed anyway to the mortgages which would follow a land purchase deal ignores the vital possibilities for agitating for agrarian democratic anti-landlord revolution by the peasantry. Thus he fatally, or fatalistically, expected the oppressed farmers to see the fruitlessness of "individualism" as an answer to their conditions and find their way to Connolly's solution as the only 'rational' one for them.

What Connolly lacked, therefore, was a concrete analysis of the actual nature and dynamic of Home Rule and BOURGEOIS nationalism in its various forms. He did not discern the revolutionary BOURGEOIS dynamic which existed in the land struggle. These were key questions of the day to which socialists would have to have related their immediate programme and tactics. They were the starting points of struggle and, while no barrier must be erected between these "national-democratic" tasks and the tasks of the socialist revolution, they have to be distinctly understood. Otherwise they cannot be flexibly combined in a programme that relates to changing class forces and that preserves at all times the political independence of the working class, a programme that establishes the correct tactical relationship of the bourgeois democratic demands to the strategic goals of revolutionary socialism.

Connolly, on the contrary, made "reconquest" of the land and nation dependent on "socialist revolution". That is, he placed these goals in the 'maximum' programme, as part of the ultimate goals of socialism. In the immediate or interim period he was left to apply in practice only the 'minimum' demands brought over from the SDF's programme - municipal reforms, the 48-hour week etc. As noted in the first article of this series, these did not include the struggle for national independence.

ENIGMATIC FORMULAE

When analysed in this way, in terms of how Connolly actually understood the connections between land, labour and nation, we find severe programmatic weaknesses behind his enigmatic sounding general positions. These formulae, such as his 'twinning' of the social revolution and the national question, have hitherto been interpreted by commentators as anticipating Trotsky and Lenin.

Greaves in particular sees Connolly's formulae as having their foundations not only in the re-affirmation "of an old Marxian principle", but also in the foreshadowing "of a new one". By this Greaves means to suggest that Connolly foreshadowed Lenin's development of the modern Marxist attitude to national oppression in the epoch of imperialist decay. Unfortunately, that was anything but the case. What Greaves' tradition understands to be Lenin's programme on the national question is in fact the Stalinist distortion of it which disastrously subordinated the working class to bourgeois nationalist forces, as in China in the twenties. The "new" stalinist principle "combined" the national-democratic and socialist tasks by confining the working class struggle strictly within the limits of the bourgeois-democratic programme, however radical. Only in a further historical "stage", whether sooner or later, would the working class then struggle for its own power. In practice such a policy meant that the working class helped the national bourgeoisie into power and saw its own mobilised strength broken for the subsequent period.

The real foundations, as far as theory goes, of Connolly's attitude to the Irish national question are, in the first place, a regressive break from the Marxist theory of the nation in a radical populist (and petit-bourgeois) direction. Connolly's SDF Marxism, with its erroneous theory of markets and capitalist development had already led him to derive wrong conclusions that had been shared by the Populists, as we wrote in our first article. This was made specific by an adaptation of Lalor's idea that the social content of the national struggle was land and labour, as opposed to capital. In this manner Connolly created a rationalistic schema in which capitalism was portrayed as the least 'practical' option for Ireland, an essentially "foreign" excrescence etc.

Secondly, in contrast to Lenin, who viewed national anti-imperialist revolutions as a necessary and contributing force in hastening the world-wide struggle to establish workers' states and thus the INTERNATIONAL basis for socialism, Connolly developed the view that socialism and nationalism in Ireland, i.e. on the national terrain, were "not antagonistic but complementary". The Irish socialist, therefore, in order to prove that he is "in reality the best Irish patriot", must "look inward upon Ireland for his justification, rest his arguments upon the facts of Irish history..." (Ransom & Edwards, p.166). Considered purely as pedagogic remarks intended to give resonance to Marxist ideas among oppressed nationalist workers, such statements are understandable. But we have shown that it was more than a matter of pedagogics with Connolly. His own understanding of the Irish revolution represented a non-Marxist adaptation to Irish revolutionary nationalist traditions, notably to the populism of Lalor. Of course he did this with the best of intentions. But in identifying with his intentions we will not dishonour his memory with the all too common failure to criticise his legacy.

Only in this way can Marxism in Ireland "ferment itself clear".

(This series will continue in the next Class Struggle with an appraisal of Connolly's philosophy of Irish history.)

Where We Stand

THE IRISH WORKERS GROUP is a revolutionary communist organisation basing itself upon the programme and principles developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the last century, by V.I. Lenin and the first four congresses of the Communist International (1919-23), and by Leon Trotsky and the first two congresses of the Fourth International up to 1948.

Capitalism is a system based on the systematic exploitation of wage labourers. It is doomed to recurring crises because of the contradiction between the enormous expansive powers of the increasing social division of labour on the one hand and the private ownership which on the other hand means that production must serve profit not need.

The competitive struggle between capitalists brings anarchy into national and world economy. As a result of the constant battle to maintain its rates of profit, capitalism condemns millions to starve while food is destroyed to maintain prices. Commodities rot or rust unsold in a world of acute want for the majority of humanity.

In its final, imperialist stage, the major capitalist powers - USA, the EEC powers and Japan - cruelly exploit the backward countries, containing their economic development within limits that can realise super-profits for transnational corporations and the great banks of Wall Street, the City of London, Tokyo, Frankfurt and Paris.

Only the abolition of private property in the large-scale means of production, and the creation of a planned economy can forever end exploitation and oppression. Equally the root causes of the oppression of women can only be removed with the abolition of class society. It is not men, as a sex, who developed and perpetuate this oppression, as feminists claim. Working class men are the natural allies of working class women. They are not the enemy. It is a class system based on private property in the means of production that requires for its continued function the use of women as unpaid domestic labourers that ensures the continued existence of this oppression.

Only the working class can lead the oppressed masses of the planet to the achievement of the historic task of a planned world economy based on human need rather than on the blind private accumulation of profits. To do so requires a social revolution that expropriates capitalist property and smashes the armed power of the capitalist class, namely its State, replacing it with the dictatorship of the proletariat, founded upon workers' councils and the armed militia of the working class.

Such a revolution must be Permanent. Whilst starting from the immediate tasks facing the workers and peasants - which in the colonial and semi-colonial world includes the land question and national independence - it cannot stop at intermediate "democratic" stages without the working class suffering a heavy defeat. The political power of the proletariat (in alliance with the other oppressed classes such as the poor peasants) is essential to resolve these "capitalist" tasks as well as to move forwards towards a planned economy and socialism. The latter is indeed impossible to achieve within an isolated nation. Thus the revolution must be international. Its fundamental task is its extension.

The so-called "communist" countries are in fact DEGENERATE workers' states - the USSR, E. Europe, China, Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea. They are workers states because the bourgeoisie has been overthrown and CAPITALIST exploitation has been suppressed. Yet their planned economies remain fundamentally hampered by a parasitic caste of bureaucrats, thus blocking the road towards socialist development. This caste has usurped political power from the proletariat and pursues a counter-revolutionary strategy under the label of "socialism in one country". The "Communist Parties" in these states, and their supporters throughout the world, are Stalinists. As revolutionary communists (Trotskyists) we place no conditions on our active defence of the workers' states. We fight to become a force within them to smash the bureaucratic caste and to restore in the USSR and create in the others workers' democracy based on soviets - workers' councils.

In the advanced capitalist states, the proletariat is repeatedly held back from the struggle for power by the social democratic (or Labour) parties, the trade union bureaucracy and the Stalinist parties. These bodies, whilst based on the workers' organisations, pursue a bourgeois policy, sacrificing the historic aims of the proletariat to reforms within capitalism. However, in periods of crisis, capitalism tries to recoup these concessions and a crisis of leadership ensues in the labour movement, which must be resolved in a revolutionary direction to win.

To this end we fight inside the workers' movement to link existing struggles, even ones for only partial demands, to the struggle for working class power. In each struggle for pay, against closures, for political rights, we fight for forms of organisation and elements of workers' control that bring workers united into conflict not only with an individual capitalist but with capitalist power and the capitalist system. Through transitional demands the masses can find a bridge between their present struggles or everyday demands and the tasks of socialist revolution.

On the basis of these principles we give unconditional support to all national liberation struggles. In Ireland we defend the revolutionary nationalist Republican Movement against imperialist backed repression. We support every action of theirs which concretely advances the struggle to remove the British Army and to smash Partition and the Northern State. But our's is the strategy of Permanent Revolution. We fight politically against Republicanism to bring the struggle under working class leadership and a revolutionary communist party, fighting to unite the majority of the Irish working class in the struggle for its own state power throughout the island. We fight for the maximum unity in struggle against capitalism with the Protestant working class, while not hiding from them our fundamental opposition to British imperialism.

We fight for the most complete separation of church and state, an end to church control of schools, hospitals and other social institutions. We fight against every confessional or sectarian expression in the organisations of the working class.

WHERE WE STAND ... continued

We fight for complete social, legal and political equality for women. Equal pay for equal work. Free, legal, safe contraception and abortion on demand, divorce at the request of one partner, with adequate state welfare for children. We stand for a working class women's movement that can fight, as an integral part of the labour movement, for workers' power. Only working class power and a planned economy can socialise domestic labour and release women from their centuries' old oppression.

We fight for the liberation of gays from the persecution and discrimination that is their lot under capitalism.

We fight against the oppression and super-exploitation, via the family, the state and at work, that is suffered by youth.

In the unions we fight for their total independence from the state, for militant class struggle policies, for immediate, partial and transitional demands which link today's struggles under capitalism to a united and coherent offensive to overthrow it.

We stand for a rank and file movement of the militant minority to win the regular election and recallability of all union officials and the fixing of their salaries at the average of their members. The defence of all such norms of workers' democracy is indispensable in the struggle for a workers' state in order to guarantee against bureaucratic degeneration. We fight to build a revolutionary alternative leadership in the unions as part of our fight to build a revolutionary party. Our goal is workers' power and nothing less.

The Irish Workers Group and its fraternal allies, Workers Power (Britain), Gruppe Arbeitermacht (Germany) and the Groupe Pouvoir Ouvrier (France) are by no means yet parties capable of challenging Stalinism and social democracy for leadership across the whole range of working class struggles. We are restricted by our size to arguing for our programme, our tactics and strategy with the proletarian vanguard, who still, by and large, give allegiance either to the reformist parties or, in some countries the various centrist organisations (degenerated fragments from the Fourth International, linked in Ireland with the PD, SWM and LWR). But we seek at the same time the maximum involvement in the class struggle. We fight for our ideas whilst rendering the maximum assistance to workers in action.

As well as new revolutionary parties, the working class needs a new revolutionary international. The last revolutionary international, the fourth, collapsed into centrism between 1948 and 1951, and disintegrated organisationally in 1953. Only its degenerated fragments exist today. What is needed is a democratic centralist international, a true world party of socialist revolution.

As a first step along this path, the Irish Workers Group, with its British, German, French and Chilean co-thinkers has founded the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International (MRCI), with the object of achieving an international democratic-centralist tendency committed to revolutionary regroupment. On this basis we can and will go further along the road to building national revolutionary parties and the international party, and the establishment of the world socialist order.

MRCI

The "Declaration of Fraternal Relations" adopted by the groups of the MRCI has been published in English in "Permanent Revolution" No. 2 from Workers Power. Due to pressure of space it is not being carried in Class Struggle. Copies may be had from the IWG for 50p including postage. For an extra 50p the "Fundamental Principles of our Programme" also adopted by the MRCI (30 A5 pages) will be included. It was published in "Permanent Revolution" No. 1 which, for 2.50 post paid also includes our jointly adopted "Theses on Reformism".

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Continued from p.31 - Grenada

Not surprising then that he utterly misrepresents the meaning of "democratic centralism" as a form of Party life created by the Bolsheviks under Lenin. Lenin's method entailed rooting the party in INDEPENDENT organisations of the class, winning them politically to a programme democratically hammered out in the Party by the vanguard of the class, and testing it out under central discipline, and always responding to the experiences of the actual class struggle.

For O'Shaughnessy the tragedy of this heroic revolutionary struggle, so brutally cut short by US revanchism, was the failure to develop liberal bourgeois parliamentary democracy in Grenada. When read with a critical eye, however, this book is yet another testimony to the counter-revolutionary role of the social-democratic and stalinist programmes in the struggle against imperialist puppet regimes in the semi-colonial world.

ISSUES OF THE MINERS' STRIKE

Two British miners killed, over two thousand injured and about 6,000 arrested - the statistics reflect not only the courageous and militant struggle of the National Union of Mineworkers but also the price that the Thatcher Government is prepared to pay to defeat this strike. For the NUM has directly challenged not only MacGregor's plans for cutting down the coal industry by making up to 70,000 miners redundant but also begins to challenge Thatcher's whole offensive against the British working class. She has mobilised the police on an unprecedented scale and has been willing to underwrite huge financial losses to win. She has even threatened to bring in the army. All this because what the strike really threatens is to break the back of her whole policy of making workers pay for the crisis of capitalism in Britain.

In 1979 Labour finally proved itself unable to push through the full devastating programme of expenditure cuts, pay limits, redundancies and de-nationalisations needed by finance-capital to make the decaying British economy a profitable arena for investment. Thatcher came to power in the same year after the so-called 'winter of discontent' with a clear policy of solving the crisis on the backs of workers while masking this in the national chauvinist sentiment of "making Britain strong again". The real content of that approach could be seen in the Tories' constant tirade of anti-union rhetoric and promises. Piece by piece Tory promises to their capitalist paymasters have been delivered with savage determination.

The Tory tactic for beginning to systematically reverse all the gains workers had achieved in the post-war period was to take on the workers section by section. Civil servants, car workers, health workers and steel workers have all been taken on one by one and defeated and union membership itself was outlawed at Government Communications HQ. In this the Tories have been continuously aided by trade union leaderships who were determined to keep strike action with sectional and partial limits, or to completely forsake strike action, and to wheel and deal so as to preserve their privileged social position as brokers between workers and bosses. Vital victories were notched up by the Tories. The 'compromise' worked out with the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation leader Bill Sirs which ended the isolated steel strike of 1980, for example, has since led to half the steel workers losing their jobs.

Thatcher's victory in the Malvinas/Falklands war against Argentina has also proved to be an ideological victory for her against the working class at home, leaving her in an even stronger position at the end of her first term and the beginning of her second term of office to develop her attacks on the unions, a fact well illustrated by her comment on the miners, that having dealt with the enemy without, she would also deal with "the enemy within".

While taking on sections of workers one by one, Thatcher has slowly prepared an arsenal of anti-union laws which are the basis for a centralised attack on the whole of the trade union movement. This legal arsenal was tested out in both the Eddie Shah-NGA dispute and against the POEU anti-privatisation campaign. Those cases showed how the laws facilitate the direct use of state power against trade union struggle. The centralised nature of the attack can only be effectively answered by an equally centralised general response. To that end it has been vital for revolutionaries to fight for a General Strike to smash the anti-union laws. Such a solution to this threat to the whole class is opposed to the broker methods of the union leadership who have counselled patience at every step as the laws were brought into action piece by piece - a counsel of fear, not fear of the bosses' state, but of the prospect of generalised action by the trade union rank and file that would challenge their parasitic role. This fight for the General Strike becomes ever more urgent with the development of the NUM strike, both to guarantee victory for the miners and to smash the anti-union offensive, for Thatcher is certain to use the full weight of her legal arsenal to smash all solidarity action as well as the mailed fist of her police thugs against the strikers on the pickets, to encourage scabbery. While it is possible for the miners to hold out alone for a significant victory on pit closures - and any gain would also be a blow to Thatcher -, so long as the anti-union laws remain intact the whole class, including the miners, remain under imminent threat of a renewed offensive. Only a General Strike could guarantee the decisive victory desperately needed now by the NUM and the whole working class. From this perspective, therefore, the fraternal group in Britain of the IWG, Workers Power, has put the fight for the General Strike at the heart of its propaganda throughout this struggle.

Workers Power has argued that the role of the bureaucracy in containing and limiting solidarity

total victory to the miners!

action has been vital in preventing the development of mass solidarity action and of a general strike: if mass solidarity action or a general strike has not yet occurred it is because of the treachery of the official leaders of our movement and the cowardice, muddleheadedness and confusion of the left reformist and centrist "opposition" to them. To put it bluntly the TUC had been given a free ride! (Permanent Revolution No. 2, p.1.)

At each stage of the strike up until August the NUM leaders have told the TUC their help was not required. Insofar as this meant their help in negotiations, this was a correct policy. But insofar as it meant not calling on the TUC to launch supportive action it was folly. In August and September the NUM leaders did raise the limited demand on the TUC for a 10p per week levy to support the miners. But even this limited demand was merely used by the miners' leaders as a negotiating pawn being withdrawn in return for a statement by the TUC conference of support and a vague call to stop the movement of coal. Both the demand for the levy and pressure on power workers to prevent the movement of coal reflect the belief of the NUM leadership that the miners can essentially go-it-alone. They refused to support a motion at Congress for a day of solidarity action. It is vital, Workers Power argues, for militants to organise and to demand of the TUC that they call a general strike to break McGregor's closure plan and Thatcher's anti-union laws; a strike which militants fight to force the official leaders to call but over which the rank and file enforce their own democratic control. At the same time Workers Power has argued for militant rank and file miners to go directly to other workers to argue with them that now is the time to bring forward their own claims and to strike in solidarity with the miners and against the anti-union laws.

The failure as yet to win mass solidarity strike action, the failure of any significant section to take up the fight for the General Strike, has meant, therefore, that the outcome of the strike even after 6 months still remains deeply uncertain and daily creates increased pressure, including pressure from the TUC since their Conference, to wheel and deal behind closed doors to find a diplomatic formula.

PROBLEMS OF THE STRUGGLE

The miners' grim determination to win this strike amid bitter hardship has been met by the state withholding and slashing welfare payments to dependents, the media systematically lying, the police terrorising pit villages, arresting miners on the motorways, bugging their phones and busting picket lines with masses of riot police, while the courts are used systematically to inflict vicious fines and restrictions for trumped up charges against thousands of militants. And in the higher courts the assets of South Wales NUM have been sequestered.

Most damaging of all, has been the success of the Coal Board and the police in keeping the scab miners at work. This division is not the only danger within their own ranks, however. The struggle also faces a threat from the weakness of the bureaucratic leadership of the NUM taken as a whole which is at root no different from the TUC

leadership currently pushing for a compromise with the Coal Board. Politically the struggling miners are confronted with the treachery of Labour which condemns their elementary attempts to defend themselves and demands not the conceding of the NUM's demands but the "intervention" of the Tory Government!

As part of the fight to map out for militant miners and supporters the road to decisive victory, revolutionaries must address all of these issues with answers which if taken up and fought for could guarantee a decisive victory.

THE SCABS

A fundamental weakness of this strike has been the failure to bring out some 20% of the NUM members who work in some of the most productive coal fields. Only a heroic minority has risked victimisation and dismissal in areas like Nottingham to strike and walk the picket lines. This systematic scabbing has to be understood in terms of the regionalism of the original miners' federation. Regions were the demesne of local officials. Its worst potential for disunity was seen in the 1926 General Strike with mass scabbing in Nottinghamshire leading to the formation of scab unions. When the mines were nationalised the NUM was founded as a supposedly more central union. But regional independence was never fully overcome. Local officials continued to dominate clearly demarcated regions. Despite false illusions in the bourgeois nationalisation of the mines the class struggle remained as real as ever in the coalfields. But local NUM bureaucrats were able to collaborate with the bosses of this state-capitalist industry on wages and conditions, while it continued to make profits for the heavily-compensated ex-owners, paying interest to them on their bonds, and interest on loans for the compensation funds.

After the decisive displays of unity and strength by miners in 1972 and 1974, Tony Benn on behalf of a Labour government - which the miners had done much to put into power - shoved through a productivity scheme using the regionalism of the NUM and the support of Joe Gormley to overcome the explicit majority opposition of the NUM membership as a whole to the bonus system. This scheme reinforced the basis for continued regionalism and intensified material differences between sections of the NUM. Not only has the scheme led directly to unsafe practices and consequent deaths of miners and greatly reduced the importance of national NUM pay negotiations, it has also led to a situation in which workers in mines with easily accessible seams such as Nottingham can earn much more than in other areas. This is the material basis of the scabbing by thousands of miners in this strike. Egged on by local bureaucrats, Nottingham miners especially have gone down a road of betrayal that is ultimately hopeless for them.

THE PROBLEM OF A NATIONAL MAJORITY

The present scale of scabbery was not inevitable from the start. Other areas with high bonus rates have turned out solidly. For this reason, in the first weeks of the strike, Workers Power argued that every effort must be made to build on the minority of miners on strike in Nottingham to break the bloc of working miners and

to isolate the hard core of the scabs. However, as the strike began to develop, the failure of the NUM leadership to come out clearly for a national strike, letting it grow spontaneously at a regional level instead, deprived the miners of any means of proving to the waverers that the strike was necessary and had the support of the majority of NUM members.

To this end Workers Power called not for a "national ballot" - as the right wing egged on by the media demanded in order to defuse the strike - but open voting at pithead meetings at every mine in the country where the issues could be collectively debated, as the basis for a unified national decision. In this way the excuses supposedly based on the rulebook, used by the scabs to justify their anti-democratic position, could have been challenged effectively. With that method, too, organs of mass working class democracy could have been built to act as a bedrock of the strike, strengthening the hand of striking minorities in the struggle against scabs. This was not done. The bureaucratic leadership of the NUM was unwilling and unable to counterpose such basic forms of workers democracy to the traditional referendum-type NUM ballot which undermines COLLECTIVE decision-making-with-debate, leaving miners individually prey to delay and the offensive of the bourgeois media. Only after six weeks on strike did the NUM leadership belatedly call a delegate conference to declare the strike national.

As a result the Nottingham miners' local majority and scabs in other regions have been welded into a reactionary bloc. There is no alternative now to presenting these scabs with an ultimatum - get out on strike by a specified date or be put out of the Union. Any who still have loyalties to the NUM or who can see the

consequences in the years ahead of going down the pits without a union capable of defending them might still strike; the rest will threaten to set up a new scab union and go to the courts against the NUM, but there is no future for them in either course of action if the NUM stands firm and comes out of the struggle stronger and more united nationally.

"AGAINST THE OFFICIALS IF NECESSARY"

Many miners still fear the consequences of throwing the scabs out of the union and place their hopes in a recent rule change which was supposed to allow the scabs to be disciplined. But the leadership has shown itself unwilling to apply the new rules decisively against the scab officials and scab workers. This is but one example of the weakness of the NUM leadership taken as a whole. Their determination to retain all ultimate control of the strike - rather than allow rank and file democracy nationally to determine tactics - was attested by their dominance of the delegate conference. And their disastrous "diplomacy" at the TUC, sacrificing concrete demands - and the vitally needed sharp public debate - for a "blank cheque" which the TUC was careful not to sign, shows their inability to break with the trade union bureaucracy in general - however much they reject the craven 'new realism' of the TUC Right.

Scargill and the "broad left" arose out of the rank and file movement which grew up before and during the 1972 and 1974 strikes. They were soon putting themselves forward as an alternative leadership and signally failed to build an independent rank and file movement capable of holding the leadership to account in struggle. They let what little rank and file organisation existed

wither and die, having achieved widespread success in union elections they have consistently avoided any open breach with the right wing of the union's leadership. The reason for this is not simply that they have been captured by the privileges of their social position - though that is not unimportant. The reason lies in the "broad left" politics they started with, which accepts alliances on the simple basis 'against Thatcher', unprincipled blocs that leave aside vital issues and leave the rank and file unorganised to fight independently of the bureaucracy if necessary. McGahey, for example referred to rank and file action as "posturing on picket lines". His brand of Communist Party cum broad left politics prefers compromise in the boardroom as better suited to a perspective of a TUC-Labour-SDP-Liberal bloc against Thatcher. Such an outlook among even the so-called "lefts" in the leadership means they will do nothing about the defence of pickets - the need for which is clear to anyone watching the conflict - even if only on television.

Orgreave: Police violence and workers' resistance



PICKET DEFENCE

So, for example, the Yorkshire area strike committee, dominated by the union leadership, merely "noted" a proposal from Doncaster miners to issue helmets and protective clothing and did nothing about it. Miners were left unprotected while very well-protected and organised police thugs went on the rampage at Orgreave. Workers Power has consistently argued for organised picket defence squads, under the control of rank and file strike committees, made up of the strongest and fittest of the militant young miners, armed (e.g. with pick handles) and with worked out tactics to make the picket lines effective.

"To date, the police have been able to break picket lines not primarily through the weight of numbers but by superiority of organisation, discipline and military technique. The mobilisation of really mass pickets around key points in all the coalfields (and in the docks strike) can greatly offset some of the state's advantages. However, as long as the issue at stake is the enforcement of a picket line, the smaller, disciplined force will defeat the bigger, undisciplined crowd. But, a large crowd which includes organised teams whose job is to defend the crowd, teams who are known to each other and to the crowd, that is a very different matter. Within every village the candidates for such teams are already well known. Already, spontaneously, they take the lead in confrontations, they discuss tactics and targets amongst themselves. What is required is the formal step of open organisation, open support for such teams from the miners' leaders at local and national level. Both on the picket lines and in the villages, the formation of defence organisations is now vital. Their appearance will transform the situation and give the initiative back to the miners." (WP No. 61 p.3)

But organisation demands leadership. Such squads cannot adequately develop spontaneously, but the left-bureaucratised officials have reserved all effective control to themselves. Meanwhile the most combative elements of the rank and file have, rightly, not waited. They have met the massed might of the state with acts of violence against scabbery

and in defence of the struggling miners and their communities. With Workers Power we say:

"The miners have every right to use violence in their war with the British state. To take up sticks and stones, and anything else to hand, against fully-armed riot police is only elementary self-preservation. To build barricades against the scabs and the baton charges, to set fire to them to stop the cavalry charges, is completely justified. To take covert 'guerilla' action against the material apparatus of scabbing, buses, trucks etc. is a perfectly legitimate response to the state's covert operations of phone-tapping, misinformation and their 'state of seige' roadblocks.

Legitimate? Certainly. Sufficient? We think not. We believe that the determination of the miners, the ingenuity of their picket squads, the solidarity within their communities and the sheer guts and energy of the pickets themselves have to be combined together through the formation of defence squads. (WP 61, p.2)

BUREAUCRACY UNDERMINES SOLIDARITY

To raise such tactics seriously and for them to have any chance of being effective it is necessary at the same time to see the question of picket defence as not just a technical question but as part of one of the central political issues of this strike. Many miners and also centrist groups (claiming to be Trotskyist) look back to the great Saltley Gate picketing victory of 1974 which proved decisive on that occasion. But what was decisive then and what is still the key for miners to lasting victories in the battles on the picket lines is the solidarity strike action of other workers which greatly boosted the picket line - both in terms of numbers on the day and in terms of its significance. Even the best organised picket defence squads need mass support - both on and behind the picket lines. But once more the major immediate obstacle to going out to get such support is the bureaucratic weaknesses of Union leaders, and not just in the NUM but in the 'Triple Alliance' of railwaymen, steelworkers and miners and in the TUC and the whole labour movement.

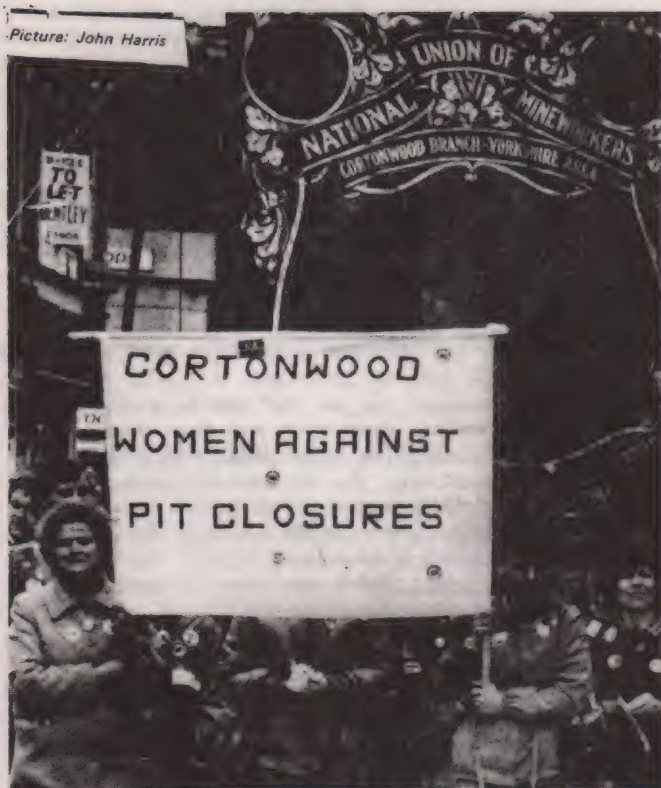
'Left' leaders like Jimmy Knapp of the

National Union of Railwaymen and Ray Buckton of ASLEF allowed themselves to be bought off with a paltry 1% increase in a productivity deal in May, refused to call for a strike or even to raise the issue of the 38,000 proposed redundancies. This not only effectively sabotaged the possibility of all the railwaymen coming out with miners but left individual sacrifices by being suspended for blacking such coal. Even now when the railwaymen's leaders have been forced to threaten an overtime ban over the redundancies, they have done so only to push the British Rail board to negotiate and have pointedly failed to build links with the miners. In a second major case - that of the teachers, the National Union of Teachers played the same game, going to



Rank and file must control these leaders.

Picture: John Harris



arbitration. And in both Docks strikes the bureaucratic methods of the TGWU were capped by John Connolly's official scabbery in negotiating to end them when dockers' solidarity was vitally needed by the NUM.

Open 'bosses men' like Sirs and Chapple denounce the miners, more influential and devious leaders like Basnett and labour leaders maintain verbal support for the miners while laying dangerous traps for them. Meanwhile 'left' leaders go to the miners' meetings, pour forth buckets of sympathy and contribute conscience money while all three types of union leaders are united in avoiding the essential solidarity - industrial action.

BUILD THE RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT

The fight on all these questions of the struggle must be taken up as part and parcel of the fight for independent rank and file organisation. Only the rank and file can provide a leadership to guarantee that the NUM will stand firm. This issue has been at the heart of the strike. Workers Power's answer has been to spell out clear practical steps for transforming the NUM, putting it under the control of a rank and file leadership, directly elected at every level, directly accountable and recallable.

"The aim of militant miners must be to use the strike to build such an organisation and transform the NUM into a real class-struggle union. Rank and file miners and leaders who are real fighters for and with the rank and file have nothing to fear from such changes. Workers' democracy of the sort we argue for will strengthen the union, not weaken it. If Scargill and the left are not to become lifelong prisoners of their positions they should lend their weight to the building of such a movement.

Their record to date suggests they will not lend their weight, but should they do so we should welcome them without sacrificing our independence to them and their positions. Our

motto must be WITH the leaders when possible, AGAINST them and REPLACE them when necessary, WATCH them always. Two years of Arthur Scargill in power shows just how right that motto is." ('Workers Power' No. 52.)

A key focus for rank and file organisation as the TUC and NUM leaders go into secret negotiations with the Coal Board is for the miners to ensure their control over any decision on a settlement. Striking miners must ensure that they and only they decide, free from media pressure:-

The delegate conference is insufficiently broad-based and representative - and it still allows the scabs representation. A national ballot has all the defects miners know and would also allow the scabs to vote. Regional ballots would disenfranchise the striking minorities in the scab areas.

Mass meetings of striking miners must have the final say - and this means rank and file miners organising now to make sure any settlement is decided on in this way. (WP 12 Sept.)

A FIGHTING WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN THE CLASS

Transforming the NUM is only one part of putting the working class as a whole on a war footing - not just the unions, but also the unemployed, youth, the communities, and as this strike has shown, of central importance is the organisation of women in the struggle. Wives, mothers, sisters, daughters and other women supporters have built committees of support throughout the mining areas. It is vital that they not be kept on the sidelines as toilers in food centres, important though these functions are. The most militant women have been correct in demanding to be fully involved in picketing, demonstrating, canvassing and organising solidarity among other workers. They should also have part as of right in the debates and decisions of strike committee meetings. And if there are proposals to settle the strike the organised women must have full rights to be heard in the discussions.

National centralised organisation of the women's solidarity groups is vital for their development and to compel the NUM to build organisations of struggle within which the women can play a role directly alongside the miners. National conferences must be controlled by the women themselves, directly electing their own leadership, rather than passively accepting an existing self-appointed leadership of wives of the Executive members such as Ann Scargill and Betty Heathfield under whose domination a conference in July resolved to "petition the Queen" - a rotten decision that was offensive to many of the best women fighters.

Those militants among the women supporters who have argued that their organisations must not simply be dissolved after the strike are absolutely correct. Instead, the gains they have made can be a powerful starting point and contribution to building an independent working class women's movement, a powerful tactic in the class struggle which can not only mobilise women as an active part of a mobilised labour movement but can simultaneously spearhead the fight against women's oppression. Within such an independently organised women's movement revolutionary communists fight for their programme as the basis for creating a fighting communist women's leadership.

ARTHUR SCARGILL AND LABOUR

All the organisations and links that are built now in struggle must be developed beyond the strike as instruments of rank and file independence in struggle. No element of the union bureaucracy can be trusted absolutely, and no matter how combative, no individual leader can be trusted to take the pressures of a ruling class offensive independently of rank and file organisations that can enforce their demands on the leadership. Arthur Scargill is no exception.

He has proven himself a vigorous and militant leader who understandably has the confidence of even the most militant miners. But, despite criticising secrecy in negotiations, for example, Scargill has taken part in several negotiations in which secrecy was intentionally a key element. And although he has refused to attack any action of the picketers, unlike the traitor Kinnock, he has failed to openly fight against those bureaucrats how have sabotaged picketing. Signally he has given no approval or leadership for the vitally necessary organisation of defence against police attack, even though himself assaulted by the police and hospitalised. Throughout the strike he has never fought to build independent rank and file organisation as the only guarantee against the possibility of a sell-out he knows his executive is capable of.

All this flows from his broad left politics, his respect for the bureaucracy in practice and for its diplomacy. His method and his policies exhibit a generally reformist perspective (however superior in its militancy) rather than a revolutionary one. This is evident in his reliance on arguments based on the "national interest", arguments that lead to chauvinist support for import controls that would seriously undermine international workers' solidarity, and utopian views of the future of a British coal industry in a capitalist society.

At the heart of his political perspectives there is the belief in a new Labour Government being an effective alternative to Thatcher, rather than any conception of a Workers Government directly accountable to organisations formed in the struggle that would put such a government into power, a Government that could be held to account and be compelled to dismantle the coercive apparatus of the capitalist state, so opening the road to workers' overthrow of capitalism in Britain. Scargill may not be like those bureaucrats who consciously connive to defeat workers' struggles, but he lacks any fundamental political alternative to their reformist perspectives. He has illusions which amount to dangerous weaknesses in the struggle, despite all his obvious strengths.

MILITANT TENDENCY AND LIVERPOOL COUNCIL

He is not alone, however, in his illusions in the Labour Party. The (degenerate Trotskyist) Militant Tendency in the Labour Party has always replaced the revolutionary slogan of a Workers Government with the empty phrase "Labour to power on a socialist programme". This is no answer for the miners. Their victory in 1974 led to a Labour Government which cut more jobs in five years than

Thatcher has yet done, introduced the divisive productivity scheme and laid plans for the national coordination of the police so that they could mobilise thousands in any one place to break pickets. Until they have candidates of their own, Revolutionaries call on British workers to vote Labour and put it to the test to break workers illusions in reformism, while fighting for an action programme for the rank and file that in no way holds back for the reformist leaders. Militant practise a method that corrals workers into a form of support for Labour that waits upon Labour to carry through their struggles for them. Their participation in active struggle is limited by this perspective.

Their inability to see the real balance of class forces before their eyes was best shown in Liverpool. Following the road already well trodden by union bureaucrats, the Militant-dominated city council accepted a rotten compromise on rates dictated by the Tory minister Jenkins. At 17% the agreed rate increase was exactly half way between their own proposal of 9% and the liberal alternative of 25%. For Thatcher it was a cheap and temporary compromise to avoid a dangerous situation in the middle of the miners' strike. Despite having campaigned and threatened outright mass defiance of the Tory rates policy, Militant claimed a victory and avoided fighting to bring out the mass strike action in Liverpool which could have been a decisive act of solidarity with the miners. For a few percentage points on the rates support grant for only one year they threw away an important chance to help smash Thatcher's whole offensive. Far from being a 'practical' compromise, let alone a victory, it was stupidity and objectively a betrayal of the miners' struggle. Workers Power, quoting Militant's leading Councillor in Liverpool, wrote in No. 60 of their paper:

Councillor Hatton once said that when the NUM are successful, "it will be like the 7th cavalry of the trade union movement coming to the support of this particular struggle". The "cavalry" is still in bitter struggle with the Tories, Militant supporters need to ask - why in the midst of battle has comrade Hatton raised the white flag in Liverpool?"



Militant Editorial Board

In Liverpool Militant controlled the Council not as revolutionaries but as municipal Labour reformers. And when it came to the crunch they were true to Labourite reformism - squandering the possibility of battling alongside the miners in order to settle with the bosses' state to avoid

open struggle. The supporters of Militant console themselves that they can unite and work uncritically with reformists by using the slogan of "Labour to power on a socialist programme" in a way which commits those reformists to going down a road which 'logically' leads to the abolition of capitalism. That road turns out to be a cul-de-sac for Militant supporters themselves - trapped in a rhetoric and a programme that prevents them openly arguing for the action goals for workers today which flow from the strategic goal of smashing capitalism. The altogether different content of the tactical fight for the Workers Government, which they reduce to merely a difference of words, turns out in the crunch to be a difference between leaving capitalism intact or beginning to open up the road of struggle to smash it.

WAITING FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

One political organisation that formally opposes itself to the Labour Party is the Socialist Workers Party (linked to the SWM in Ireland), but this "rejection" of reformism does not equip the SWP, either, to offer direction towards a miners' victory. Just as Militant aims to build the Labour Party whatever the implications for the class struggle, so the centrists of the Tony Cliff current reduce their task to simply ... building the SWP!

Instead of arguing for action goals, tactics, and forms of organisation that flow from the objective needs of the struggle and that are capable, if taken up, of developing it in a revolutionary direction, their 'advice' merely parrots what militant miners are already doing. The SWP didn't even call on the rail workers to strike until a week AFTER Scargill had already done so. And since Scargill didn't go any further than call on individual unions to take solidarity action, neither did the SWP. They have not called for the formation of defence squads or building the links with the women's support groups. The list of what they called for in the first four months of the strike was short and sweet - bigger pickets and more collections - and totally insufficient. As Workers Power wrote in their paper (No. 56 p.6):

The working class does not need a 'party' to tell it to do what it is doing already. Obviously it does not need one when its trade union actions are effective. It needs this 'party' even less when those actions are inadequate and not the way to victory. The miners' strike itself has exploded the myths that the SWP has built itself on in the past period. Hasten the day when that becomes clear to the best SWP militants.

Little has changed since. At the end of June the SWP declared that the strike had reached a new stage, but they still don't call for the necessary steps to be taken to build the rank and file organisation or for a general strike. The focus remains on building unorganised undefended mass pickets. In its 'Socialist Worker' of June 28th they declare under the vague slogan of 'Rally behind the miners':

The Tories may try to lull the miners into passively waiting for the cold weather and then launch the biggest scabbing operation yet to remove the coal from the pithead. Preventing this danger means stepping up the picketting now. It also means a blacking campaign by other trade unionists to stop the movement of coal and steel completely. And if the law is used against the miners' union as it may be in South Wales it

means sympathy strike action. (No. 895 p.3)

Sympathy strike action only if the law is used against miners! Nothing more! Yet when the courts did sequester South Wales NUM funds it was rank and file miners - not Socialist Worker - who confirmed Workers Power's perspective by beginning to raise the demand on the TUC to call a general strike. It is also the rank and file miners and not the 'revolutionary' SWP who have begun to recognise the need for organised picket defence. And the midlands miners did not wait on the SWP either to learn the need to build direct links between pits.

Indeed, the SWP doesn't simply fail to argue the necessary tactics for the struggle. They bend under the pressure of the bourgeois hysteria against the miners' use of violence: "History shows that successful strikes are won by mass action and mass pickets - not hit and run raids. It also shows that such raids can give trade union officials an excuse not to deliver solidarity." (Socialist Worker.)

Underneath this trailing behind the level of consciousness among militant workers lies the SWP's whole view of the period. Anxious to explain away their own past failures they have decided to label the present period one of "downturn" in which workers are supposed to be in retreat and in which the 'party' must therefore pull out of struggle and regroup itself. Surely the miners' stand should have changed the SWP's view? But no:

The miners' strike is an extreme example of what we in the Socialist Workers Party have called the downturn in the movement. (Cliff, Socialist Worker, April 14).

The reason given, incredibly, is that the miners are merely reacting to an attack on them and are therefore seen to be merely 'on the defensive'! This leads to a criminal neglect of the real task of revolutionaries to point a way forward for the miners in a struggle that is the most powerful challenge to the British ruling class for a decade. The SWP states its intention to, instead, use the strike for its own ends:

The key thing for us is to focus on the weaknesses of the strike, to locate them and focus on them. This is not to demoralise people, but to say 'what is to be done?'. If we do this we can build the reputation of our party, we can build up networks around us, so that if there is a dock strike in November or a civil service strike next year or whatever the next struggle is we will be that much stronger. (SWP's Socialist Review, May 1984.)

But stronger for what? If its propaganda, in the action it calls for, consciously avoids the NEEDS of to-day's struggles what can such a party, even if bigger, do in the future but repeat the same opportunist policies? The SWP in this strike will urge the miners simply to build bigger pickets with little belief themselves that such pickets are enough. They will criticise the bureaucracy, to win credibility later, not to fight for an alternative now. They offer no answers to the miners. Nor is it the case that they temporarily hide answers that they would bring out at another time when the 'party' is 'stronger'. No, the SWP has no answers. Its economism - tailing the existing level of the struggle - and its sectarianism in building the party for its own sake have characterised the SWP



Miners picket of Eggborough power station.

Picture: John Sturrock (Network)

from the start. Because its method consistently fails to fight for answers to the concrete needs of the working class which would be capable of opening the road of revolutionary struggle, the politics of the SWP are a dead end that offers no effective alternative to the reformism against which they claim to define themselves.

TOTAL VICTORY TO THE BRITISH MINERS! SMASH THE ANTI-UNION LAWS!

This strike is not some passing and doomed expression of a 'downturn'. It is a real spontaneous fightback by workers. The SWP and SWM talk a lot about spontaneity, indeed they make a fetish of it, but they don't recognise what it really is when it happens. The struggle of the NUM has made it possible to challenge Thatcher's whole vicious attack on British working people. It can become a major turning point for the British working class. Revolutionaries have a duty to fight to make it so.

At the centre of their calls for action on all the concrete issues of the struggle must be the fight for the one major action goal that is necessary to guarantee total victory for the explicit demands of the strike and for the struggle against the anti-union laws which are posed as an issue for the class as a whole throughout this struggle. That goal is to bring about an indefinite general strike specifically for these demands. Despite being as yet a much smaller organisation than either Militant or the SWP, Workers Power engages in practical solidarity with the miners' struggle with this method and programme. However remote from the present consciousness of workers the need for a general strike may seem, this does not deter Workers Power from hammering home the fight for it NOW, making the propaganda that explains to militants the vital need for it, and especially focussing on this slogan when events such as the sequestering of NUM funds make give it a concrete immediacy. But as revolutionaries, they also explain how such tactics and forms of struggle are linked to the need to confront and overthrow not just Thatcherism, not just Toryism but the

whole political and social system of imperialist capitalism in Britain.

Trotsky wrote that the general strike poses the question "Who is the master of the house - which class is to rule?". From this understanding of the potential of generalised direct action by the working class, vital questions are raised by revolutionaries which they must already prepare the best militants to answer. These include the importance of forcing the TUC to call such a strike and the indispensable need for the rank and file to control it; the need for democratic Action Councils of accountable delegates to work out tactics and strategy and to implement them; the need for such councils to organise the material needs of the working class districts and to organise defence; the need to centralise the whole system of Action Councils as organisations of struggle and potentially organs of class rule; the need for political action goals that can take the struggle the furthest possible distance along the road to the overthrow of capitalism.

In unfolding the issues of this perspective of transition to workers' own class rule, the slogan of the Workers Government is a capstone. Revolutionary communists use it to cut against the determination of the existing class leadership to limit all struggle to the cul-de-sac of a new Labour Government. Even with the least developed outcome of a successful struggle by the Miners, the fight for this tactic can be a means to rally militant workers to see the need to keep their mobilised organisations on a war footing. Only then will they be able to forcibly remind a future Labour Government WHO put them in power and whose class needs must be clearly met by any Labour Government if they are not in turn to be faced with the same fate as Thatcher and her cronies!

The struggle that the general strike can potentially open up must be given a strategic purpose by a revolutionary communist party. That STRATEGIC aim is to put the British working class onto a footing where the seizure of state power by the workers becomes a real possibility. With that in view the communists continue to openly explain as part of their programme the need to arm the class for an insurrection against capitalist rule at the point where the struggle makes that possible and necessary. Thus by starting from practical involvement in solidarity work, openly arguing for the necessary tactics and slogans that can carry the struggle forward, communists openly put forward to the advanced militants their explanation of the tasks that lie ahead and seek to win the best fighters to their full programme. In this way, in organic relation to the living needs of the working class struggle NOW, Workers Power seeks to build the revolutionary party needed in the British working class. In this the Irish Workers Group stands fully with them in our joint fight to build a new International, a party of world revolution in the tradition of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

TOTAL VICTORY TO THE BRITISH MINERS!
GENERAL STRIKE NOW AGAINST THE ANTI-UNION
LAWS IN BRITAIN AND THE SIX COUNTIES AND
TO GUARANTEE ALL PIT JOBS
FOR A WORKERS GOVERNMENT!

Book Review: Grenada

"Grenada - Revolution, Invasion and Aftermath by Hugh O'Shaughnessy (Sphere Books) 1984.

The invasion of Grenada in October 1983 by United States marines bloodily overturned the "New Jewel Movement" which had come to power in a revolution in March 1979 against the pro-U.S. tyrant Gairey.

O'Shaughnessy's book covers events from the beginning of the revolution to its tragic end. It is factually a useful book but it bears the marks of the author's standpoint as a journalist for the bourgeois 'Observer' in Britain. As a liberal O'Shaughnessy condemns Reagan's invasion of Grenada as a flagrant breach of 'international law' and ridicules his excuses for the invasion - supposedly to save lives of 'threatened' US citizens. In challenging Reagan's pretence he demands to know why the US made nothing of the murder in El Salvador of four US citizens by the death squads of Napoleon Duarte's regime.

O'Shaughnessy's thesis is contradictory. He reveals the facts which leave no doubt about the capitalist limits within which the New Jewel revolution confined itself, and yet he uncritically accepts the pretensions of the NJM leaders to be 'Marxist Leninists'. His explanation for the tragic finale of the Grenadian revolution therefore proves far from satisfactory.

The original New Jewel Movement was an amorphous group of people committed to political discussion and the development of Grenadian culture. Ideologically the party was not crystallised into one uniform tendency but represented a populist alternative to Gairey's harsh regime. Over a period of years two distinct strands had emerged within it. The original NJM, consisting of Bishop, Radix, Whiteman and others, was social-democratic in character. It is therefore not surprising that it affiliated the movement to the "Socialist International" (alongside the Irish Labour party!). However, the return of Bernard Coard to Grenada in 1976 marked a turning point in the history of the NJM. During his time in England Coard had been close to the Communist Party. Now he established a Marxist Study Group - in reality a stalinist political formation. Coard was to become the NJM's main theoretician and to exercise enormous influence on it.

The unity of the NJM was thus a fragile one. Two factions continued to give personal allegiance to their respective leaders, Bishop and Coard. Bishop was the more popular. However, Coard's was a carefully selected, dedicated following, increasingly active within the party.

Before taking power in March '79 the NJM had about 50 members among a population of 110,000. There were never more than 300 in the party at any time. Few attempts were made, while in power, to root the party in Grenadian society. It remained a cliquish elite, run by a Central Committee, with day to day decisions taken by a Political Bureau, a leadership accountable to nobody. Not just political life in the Party was controlled in this way but in Grenadian society as a whole. There were NO genuine committees of "popular" or working class power. Even the organs of "popular consultation"

favoured by Bishop were tightly controlled as appendages to the party. (Prior to 1983 the USFI - in Ireland the PD - was falsely claiming these as genuine organs of popular power - typical of their constant trailing of petty bourgeois 'left' leaderships.)

This is hardly surprising, for the essential unity of programme binding the two factions was their concern to preserve a capitalist "mixed" economy, despite all the "marxist" rhetoric of Coard. Therefore any attempt to rally the workers and peasants in independent committees of struggle, and as organs governing society, would have risked opening up a struggle against the private owners of production and the imperialist financiers who continued to impose harsh conditions of living on the masses. Although the NJM made considerable headway with reforms within these limits, "Coard for his part initiated policies which apparently strengthened the capitalist complexion of the Grenadian economy". A senior banker remarked that "Coard was always prepared to meet the IMF more than half way."

In attempting to explain the power struggle within the NJM, O'Shaughnessy offers essentially one answer - the enlightened liberal Bishop fell victim to Coard's ideological dogmatism. Criticism of Bishop brought proposals to divide power between Bishop and Coard, but not to inform the masses. The real reason for the attack on Bishop's wing was Grenada's growing economic crisis - made inevitable by the utopian attempt to balance the needs of the masses with the demands of imperialist capital while limiting the revolution within a 'bourgeois stage'. In March 1983 a proposed budget cut of 20% caused Bishop to run to Washington peddling compromise in return for credit. Coard condemned this move, insisting instead on turning to the USSR, Cuba, E.Germany for support to counterbalance the imperialist pressure. The task of IMPOSING the kind of sacrifices necessary "to meet the IMF half way" demanded a tightly knit organisation. The time had come to purge the movement of Bishop and his social democratic followers. They were thus placed under house arrest. The armed militias previously established to resist a US invasion were disarmed on the orders of the Revolutionary Military Council which feared they would mobilise against it. The Coard group remained aloof from the masses. The execution of Bishop is an indication of how out of touch they had become with popular feeling. The catchcries of the national protest which followed Bishop's death were "No Bishop No Revo", "We don't want communism".

Instead, O'Shaughnessy ascribes the rupture to the party's application of "democratic centralism". He does not begin to recognise that the "Marxist Leninism" of Coard was in reality a stalinist programme wedded to bureaucratic methods and class collaboration, determined not to allow power into the hands of rank and file workers' committees, empirically balancing between the pressures of the masses and imperialism, protecting its own privileged social position.

STOP THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL!

The small size of some of the demonstrations against the impending Criminal Justice Bill is no measure of the deep unease felt even among sections of the ruling class at the savagery of its proposals. These dare not fight openly against it, for they fear the rising tide of social unrest that their economic savagery is creating in working class areas. Genuinely concerned statements of social workers and prisoners rights activists and some lawyers have been amplified by condemnations from the unusual bedfellows of trade union leaderships and church hierarchies. If this Blueshirt Bill looks increasingly likely, however, to become law it is because those union leaders and trade councils have not been forced off the fence into mobilising against it.

The "anxiety" of the hierarchy should give us no cause whatever to put their local runners from the lower clergy to the fore in any campaign to stop the Bill. It merely shows that they know the intended savagery of Noonan's "Policeman's Charter". It shows their fear that disillusioned youth will be driven into open and bitter alienation from all bourgeois authority. For it is especially the youth of working class areas who will be brutalised most at the whim of the squads of uniformed and plainclothes thugs and kidnappers.

No-one even pretends any more that this Bill is simply to close loopholes that allow the professional criminal to get off on technicalities. It is deliberately intended to strengthen police powers to intimidate all and sundry in the streets and communities where the capitalist system is solving its profits-crisis through mass unemployment, poverty and rotten living conditions. It aims to turn the "emergency" arrest provisions of the Offences Against the State act into "ordinary" law - which the plainclothes police have illegally been doing wherever they could before now.

Noonan's Blueshirt offensive destroys all guarantees of the right to walk freely in one's own street, the right to silence about one's self or one's neighbours, the right to physical safety in legal custody, the right of 12 year-olds to the protection of their families. But it is not simply an attempt to pulverise democratic rights that apply to all. It has a specific CLASS purpose - to screw the lid of repression and fear down on all victims of deepening capitalist anarchy, not just those driven to petty crime, and to create conditions also in which any serious political fighters against the system can be harassed with impunity.

Given the clear class content of this issue the union leaders have a double responsibility - to defend democratic rights in general and directly to the families and communities of their own members - to GET OFF THE FENCE. They have SPOKEN against the Bill but DONE NOTHING. Yet all the time they monopolise the centralised power and organisation of the only class with the power or the consistent interest to stop this Bill. Unions and Trades Councils must be forced make it a central issue at every level of their affiliated organisations with a view to mobilising protest and the force of industrial stoppages by workers, mass strike action up to and including a general strike, if necessary, until victory.

Even more concretely, the unions have the power to FORCE Labour out of Coalition as a means of stopping the Bill, and the power to keep that organised strength on a footing to prevent any further versions of such repression. Labour is directly responsible for making this savage attack possible on civil liberties. We condemn as a lie and a fraud their proposed trade-off for a police complaints tribunal operated by the police in exchange for a bill that allows the police harass, falsely arrest, brutalise and blackmail the citizen without any legal comeback.

**FORCE MERRIGAN, ATTLEY, CARROLL AND THE ICTU TO GET OFF THE FENCE!
FORCE THE TRADES COUNCILS TO MOBILISE NOW TO STOP THIS BILL
TAKE THE ISSUE INTO THE WORKPLACE AND FIGHT FOR ACTION NOW
TO FORCE THE UNION LEADERS AND LABOUR TO ACT.**